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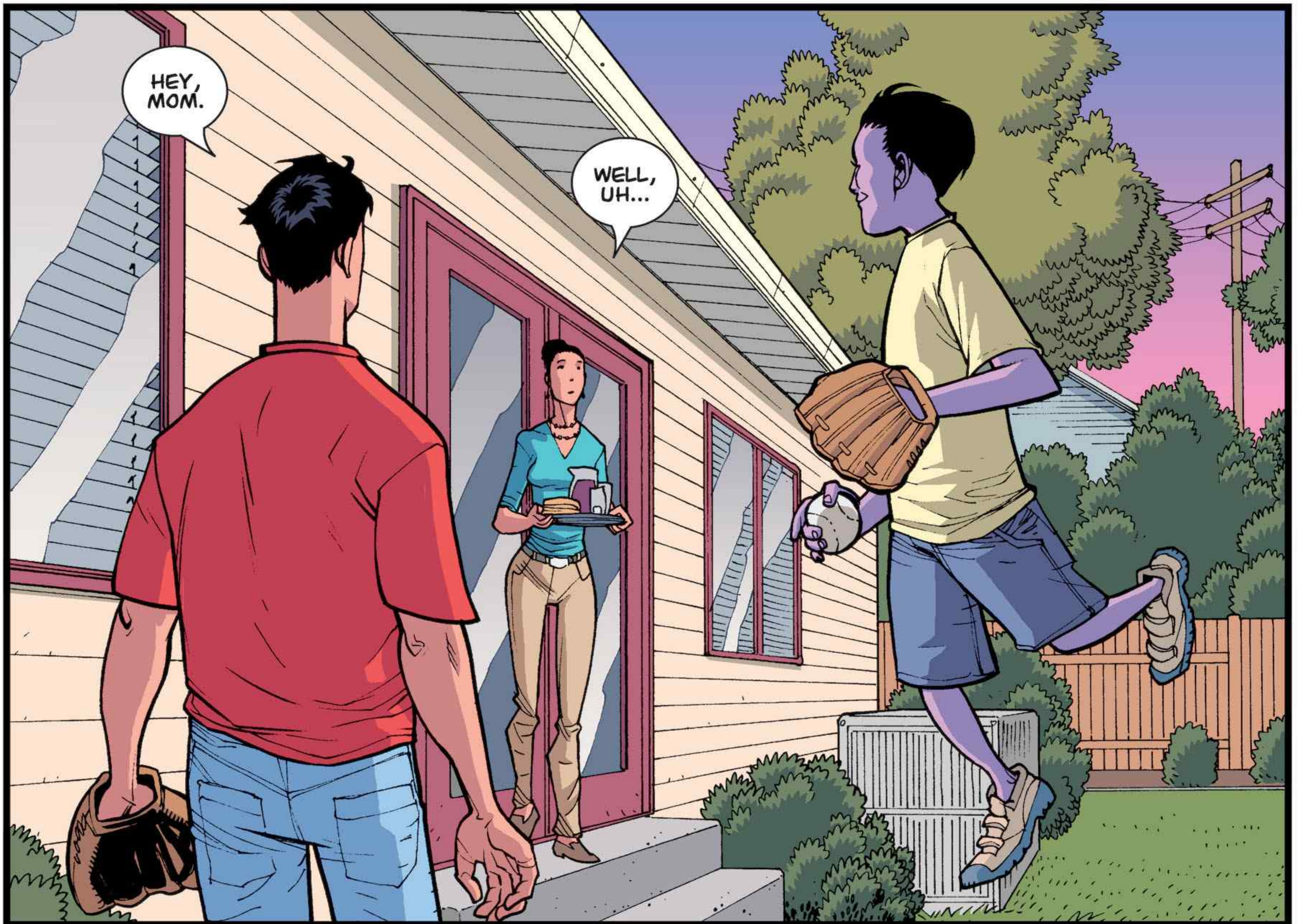


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WELL, IF THAT'S ALL IT IS--IF HE JUST NEEDS SOMEONE TO GUIDE HIM AND HELP HIM FIGURE STUFF OUT--I COULD DO THAT.

YOU'VE GOT SCHOOL.

I COULD QUIT SCHOOL.

MARK.

WHAT? WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

I'M FAILING MOST OF MY CLASSES--I'M JUST NOT DOING WELL AT ALL. I'VE GOT TOO MANY DISTRACTIONS. I NEVER HAVE TIME TO DO MY HOMEWORK. I **MISS** MORE CLASSES THAN I ATTEND.

AND LET'S FACE IT... I'M TOTALLY WASTING MY TIME THERE. I'M GOING TO COLLEGE TO BUY TIME--NOT TO LEARN SOMETHING.

WITH MY POWERS I COULD DO **ANYTHING** AND MAKE A LIVING. WORLD'S FASTEST PIZZA DELIVERY BOY--ANYTHING. CECIL IS ALREADY PAYING ME MORE THAN I COULD EVER MAKE WITH A "REAL" JOB.

YOU KNOW I DON'T REALLY **NEED** SCHOOL. WHAT--AM I GOING TO BE A DENTIST? WHY WOULD I DO THAT?

I'D BE BETTER OFF **HERE**--TRAINING OLIVER. I COULD MOVE BACK HOME AND EVERYTHING.

I DON'T SEE WHY NOT.

YOU'RE **NOT** QUITTING SCHOOL.

TELL ME WHY I **NEED** SCHOOL AND I'LL CONSIDER STAYING.

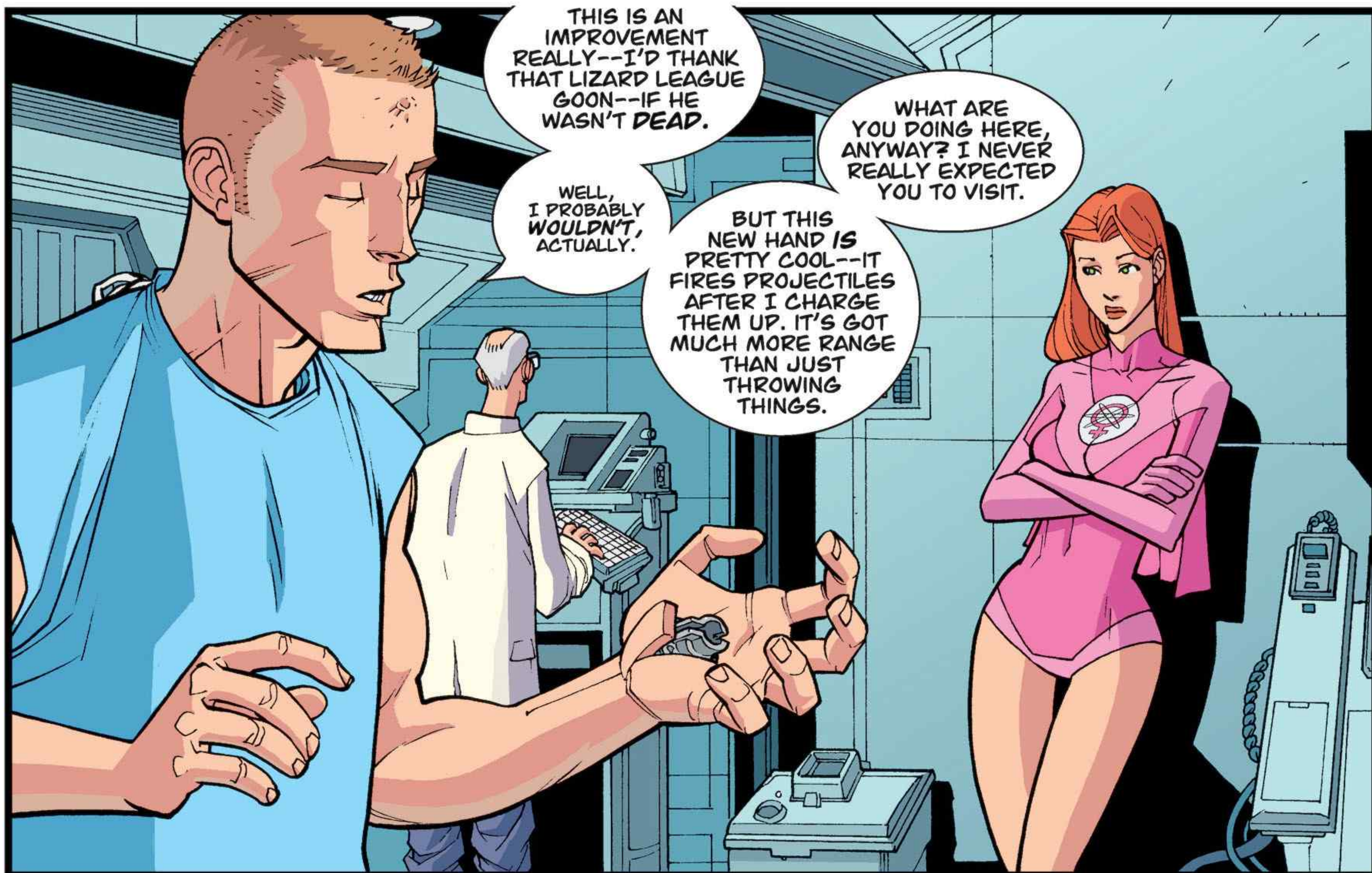
GO ON.

DEEP UNDERGROUND, BENEATH THE UNITED STATES PENTAGON. CECIL STEDMAN HEADS UP THE GLOBAL DEFENSE AGENCY.

REX SPOLOE IS CURRENTLY IN THE MEDICAL CENTER, HEALING AFTER SUFFERING A GUNSHOT WOUND TO THE HEAD, BROKEN LEG AND SEVERED HAND.

UNITED STATES
PENTAGON

Parking in Rear



THIS IS AN IMPROVEMENT REALLY--I'D THANK THAT LIZARD LEAGUE GOON--IF HE WASN'T DEAD.

WELL, I PROBABLY WOULDN'T, ACTUALLY.

BUT THIS NEW HAND IS PRETTY COOL--IT FIRES PROJECTILES AFTER I CHARGE THEM UP. IT'S GOT MUCH MORE RANGE THAN JUST THROWING THINGS.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, ANYWAY? I NEVER REALLY EXPECTED YOU TO VISIT.

LOOK, YOU'RE A SCUMBAG, OF THE HIGHEST ORDER--

THANKS.

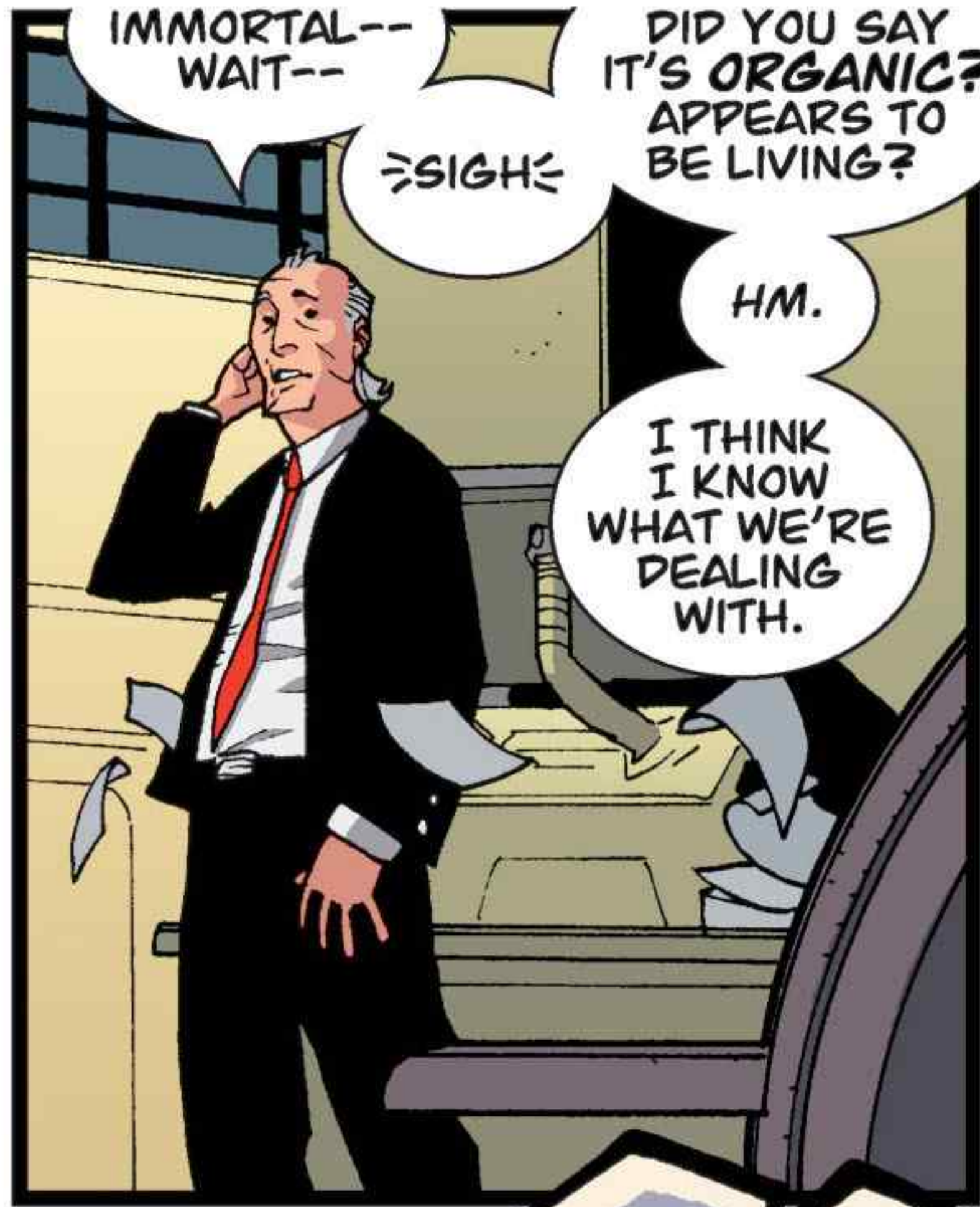
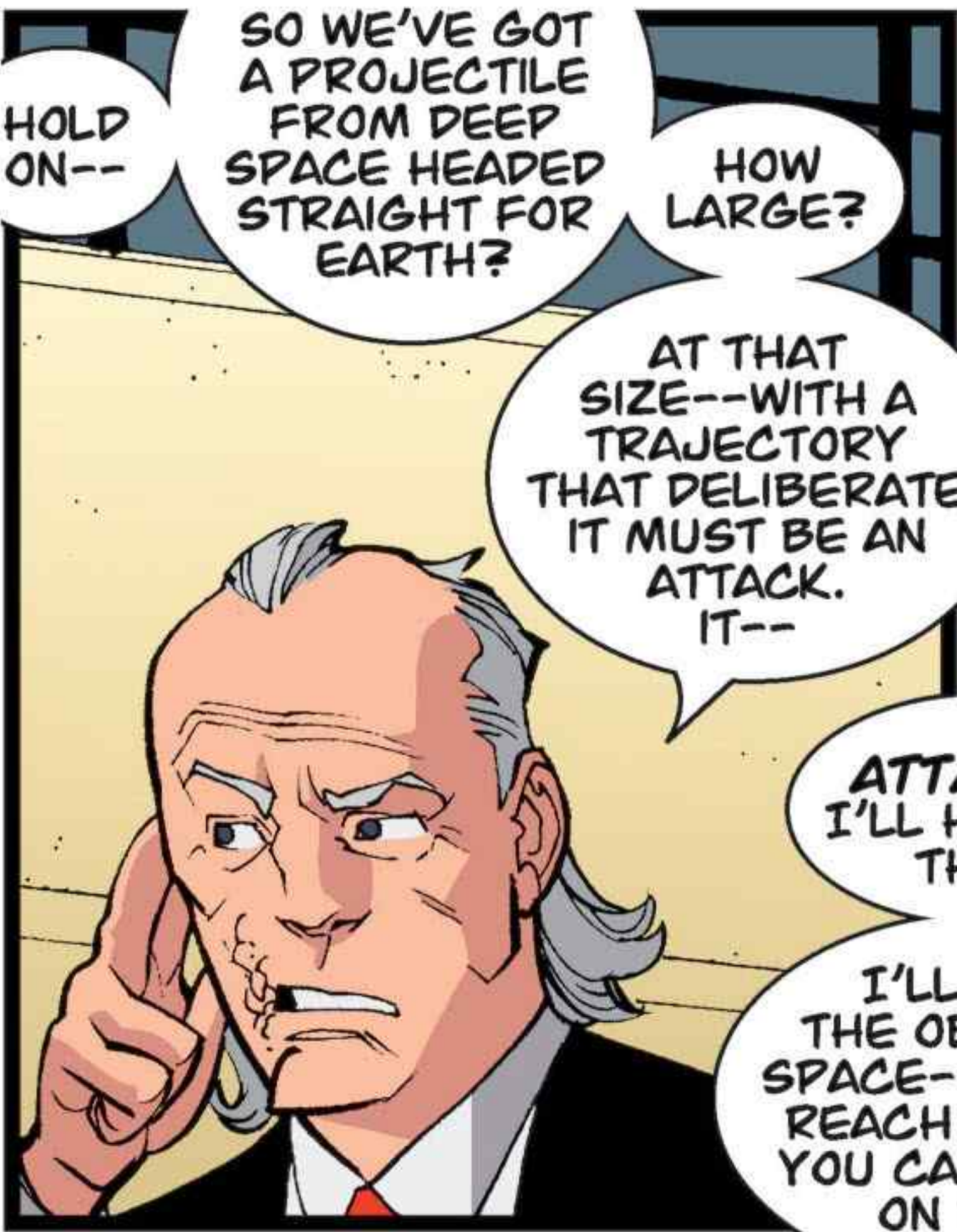
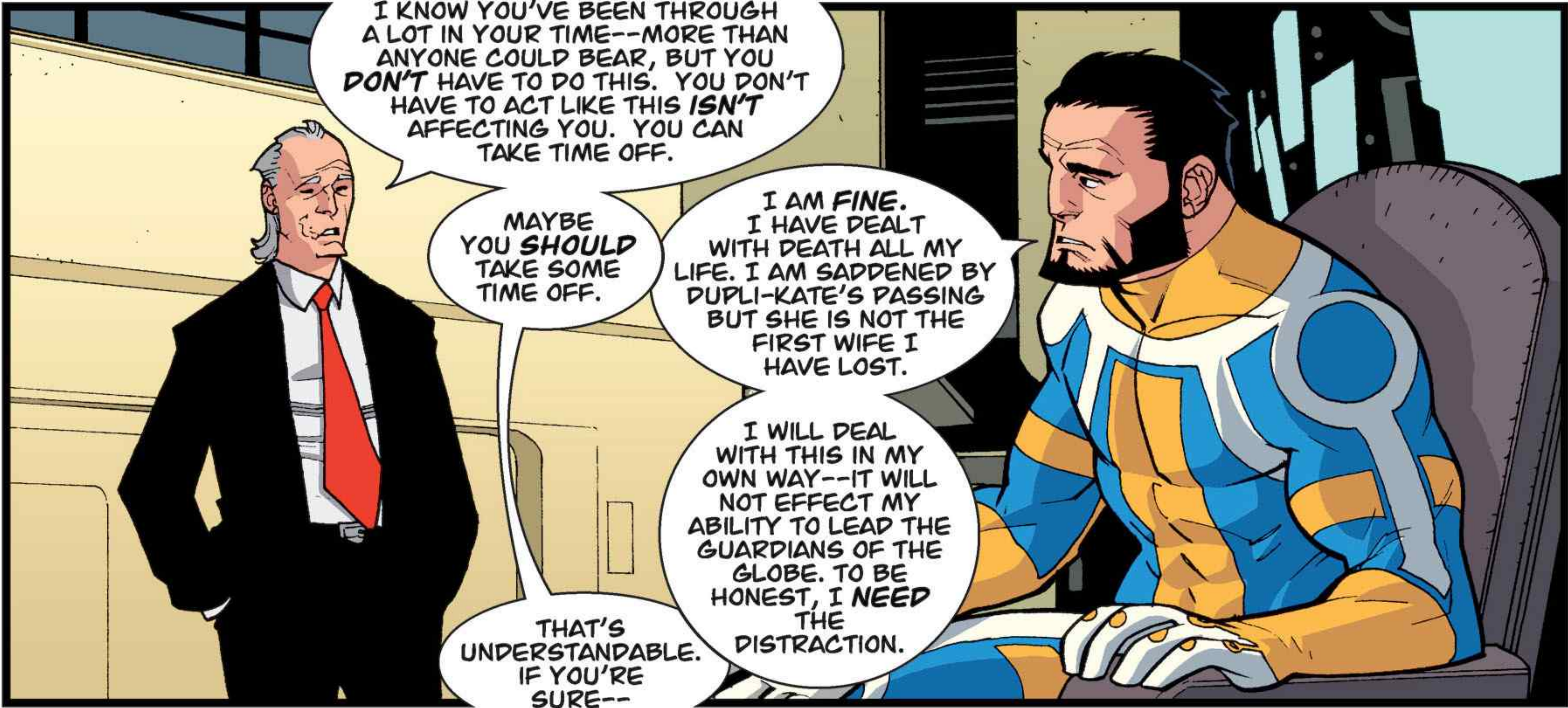
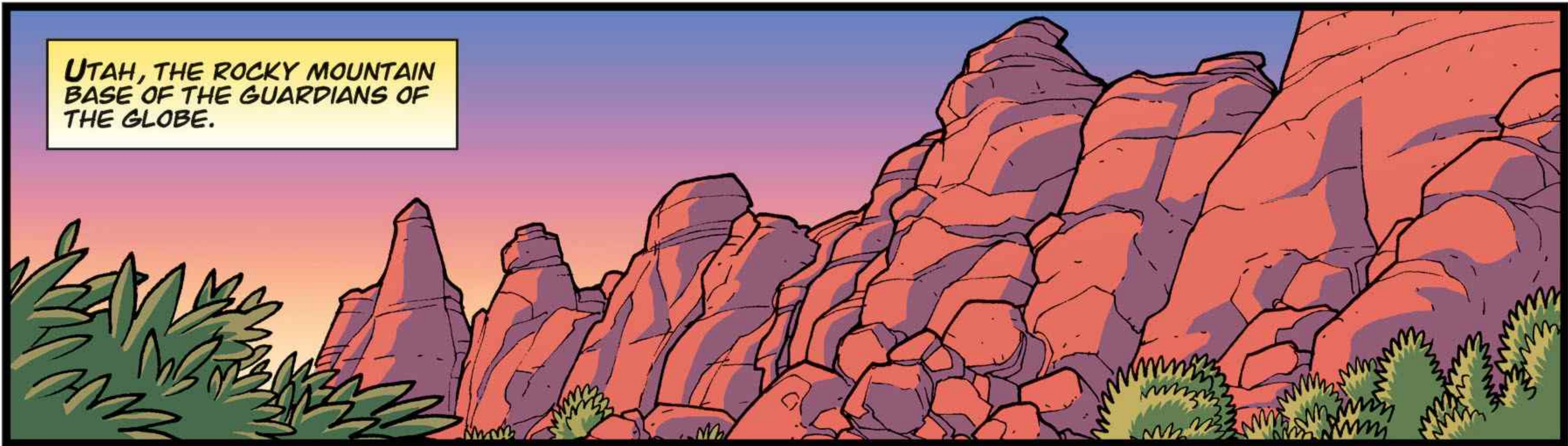
YEAH, YOU KNOW WHAT? I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHY I CAME EITHER.

YOU'RE JUST STOPPING BY ON YOUR WAY TO VISIT INVINCIBLE. THAT'S IT, RIGHT?

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I'D BE VISITING HIM?

I KNOW YOU ALWAYS KINDA HAD A THING FOR HIM. HE'S A GOOD GUY-- YOU SHOULD GO FOR IT.

HE JUST TOLD ME HE BROKE UP WITH HIS GIRLFRIEND.





THE GRAYSON HOME.

HE'S OUT. HE DOESN'T USUALLY GO DOWN FOR A NAP THIS EASY. I GUESS FLYING MAKES HIM TIRED.

DOES FLYING MAKE YOU TIRED?

AT FIRST MORE THAN NOW. I HAVE TO REALLY PUSH IT WITH MY SPEED TO BREAK A SWEAT FLYING. IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN IF YOU CAN'T DO IT.

SO... WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH THE LITTLE GUY?



ARE YOU REALLY FAILING ALL YOUR CLASSES? I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THAT.



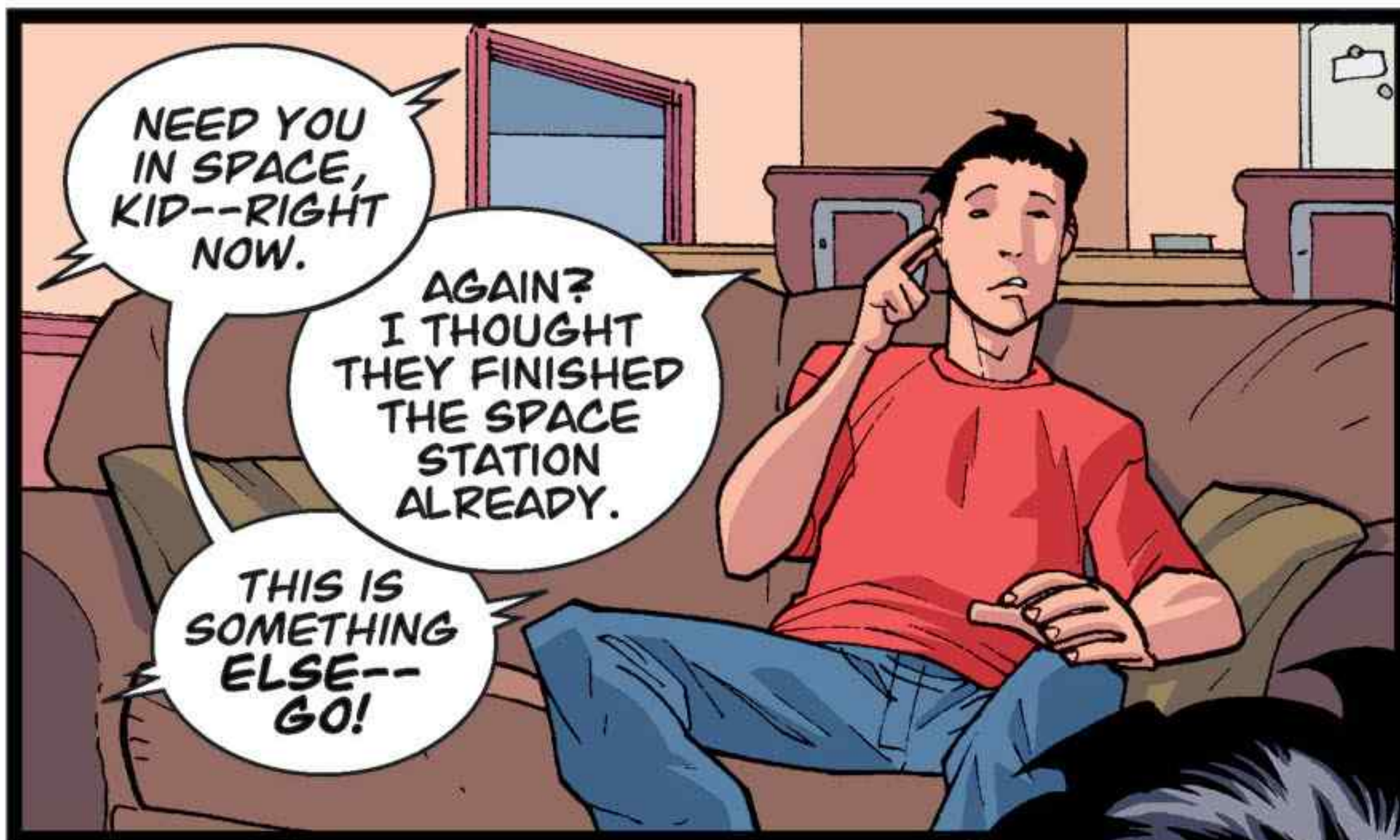
YEAH. IT'S JUST HARD TO FIND THE TIME.

HONESTLY, I JUST DO NOT TAKE IT SERIOUSLY. I DON'T CARE ABOUT IT. IT'S NOT IMPORTANT TO ME.



I CAN'T ARGUE WITH YOU. THINGS LIKE SCHOOL **MUST** SEEM UNIMPORTANT WHEN YOU'RE OUT IN SPACE TRYING TO SAVE THE WHOLE PLANET.

DO YOU WANT TO QUIT?



NEED YOU IN SPACE, KID--RIGHT NOW.

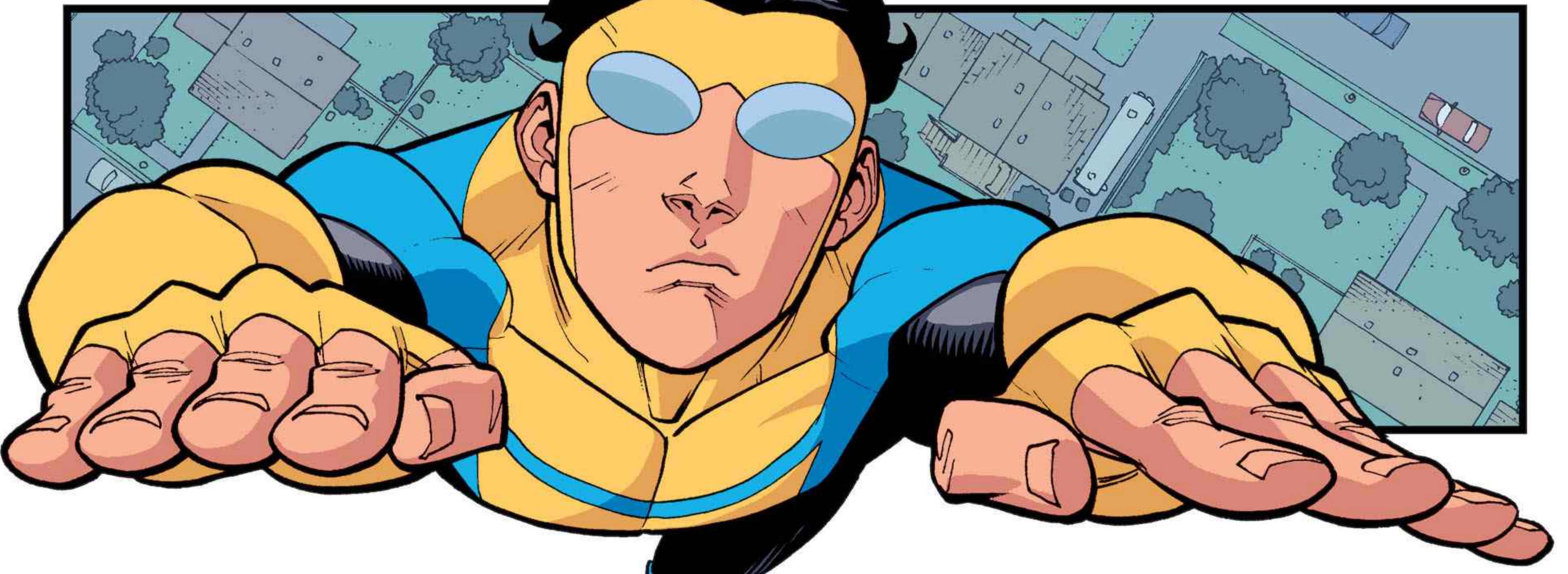
AGAIN? I THOUGHT THEY FINISHED THE SPACE STATION ALREADY.

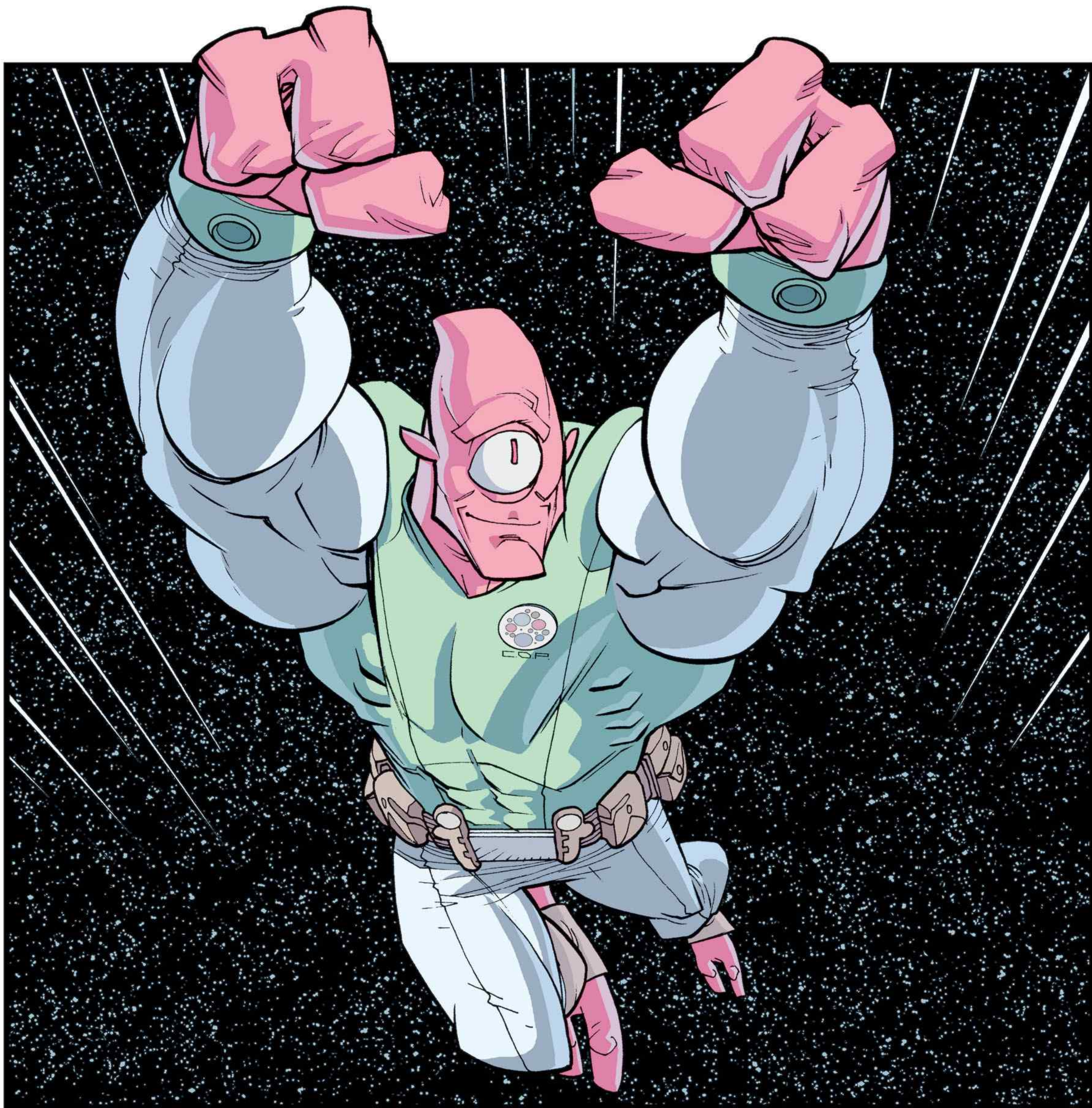
THIS IS SOMETHING ELSE--GO!



WE CAN FINISH THIS LATER. GO ON--BE A HERO... MAKE ME PROUD.

I'LL SEE YOU SOON.

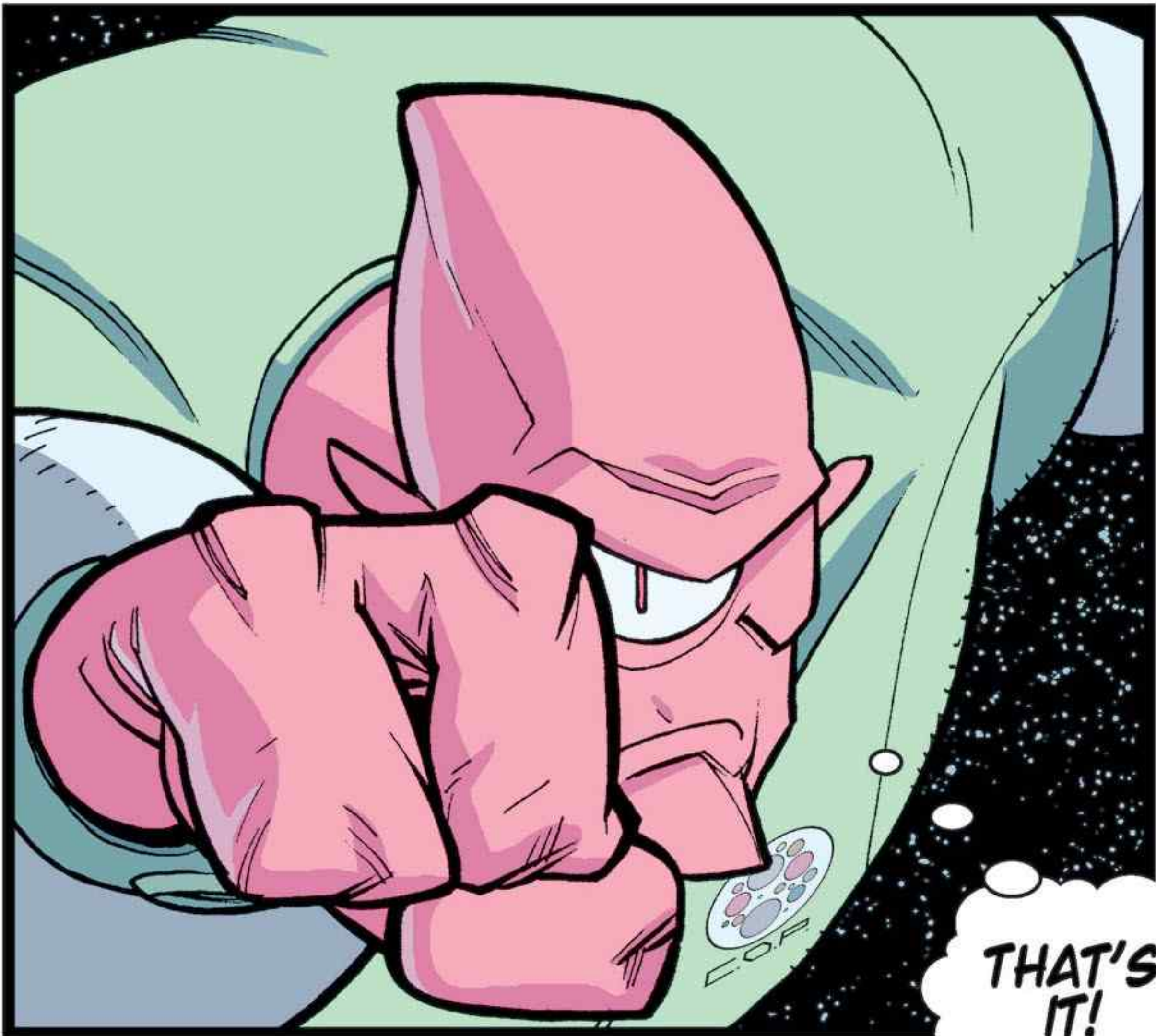






--SOMEONE.





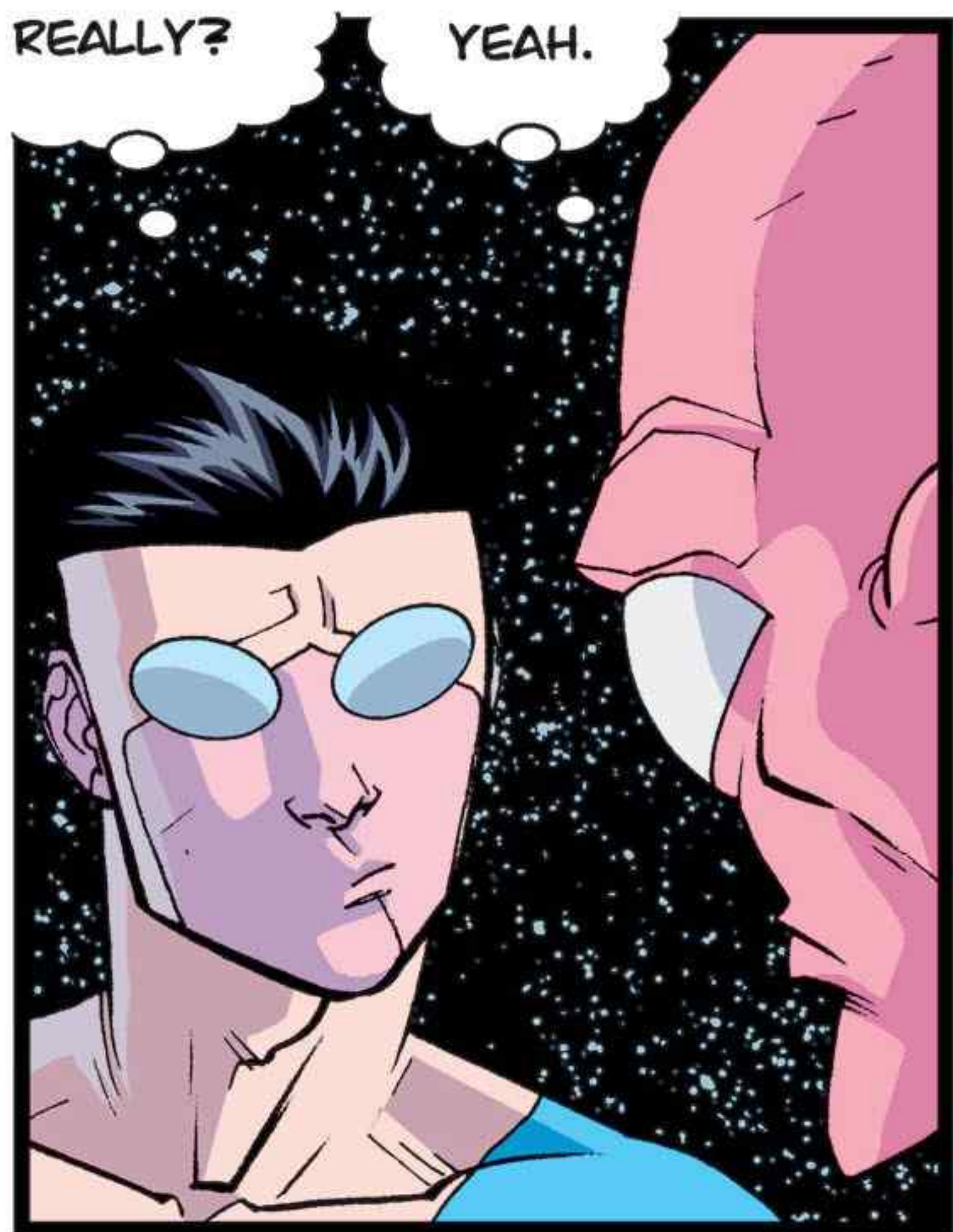


WHAT THE HELL IS THIS, INVINCIBLE?

WHO IS THIS PERSON?

ALLEN, DUDE--PLEASE. THIS IS ALL JUST A BIG MISUNDERSTANDING.

YOU GUYS CAN'T HEAR EACH OTHER. IT'S JUST ME, I CAN HEAR YOU BOTH--YOU CAN HEAR ME. THE LINK DOESN'T GO TO EACH OF YOU.



REALLY?

YEAH.



OKAY--THIS GUY IS NOT THAT STRONG AT ALL. YOU'D KILL HIM--YOU'D JUST RIP HIM APART.

HE'S ALSO A TOTAL JERK. BUT HE'S BEEN THROUGH A LOT RECENTLY--SO CUT HIM SOME SLACK.



OH, COOL.

SEEMS OUR MUTUAL FRIEND HAS SORTED EVERYTHING OUT HERE. I'M NOT ATTACKING OR ANYTHING. I REALLY JUST CAME TO SEE HIM.

MY NAME'S ALLEN. IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU.



I'M THE IMMORTAL. I... APOLOGIZE FOR THE MISUNDERSTANDING. I DIDN'T HURT YOU DID I?

NOT EVEN A LITTLE BIT. IMMORTAL, HUH? I JUST FOUND OUT RECENTLY I MAY BE IMMORTAL--UNABLE TO BE KILLED AT LEAST. DON'T KNOW IF I'M SAFE FROM OLD-AGE.

ARE YOU? I WOULD ASSUME SO BECAUSE OF THE NAME, BUT REALLY--ASSUMING GOT US TO WHERE WE WERE A FEW MINUTES AGO, SO--

YOU CAME TO SEE ME? REALLY?

WHAT ABOUT?



YOUR DAD. YOU GOT A PLACE WE CAN TALK? I'D REALLY LIKE TO GET OUT OF SPACE FOR AT LEAST A FEW MINUTES DURING THIS VISIT.



SURE, FOLLOW ME.

NICE MEETING YOU, MISTER IMMORTAL.



UPSTATE UNIVERSITY.
THE DORM ROOM OF MARK
GRAYSON AND WILLIAM
CLOCKWELL.

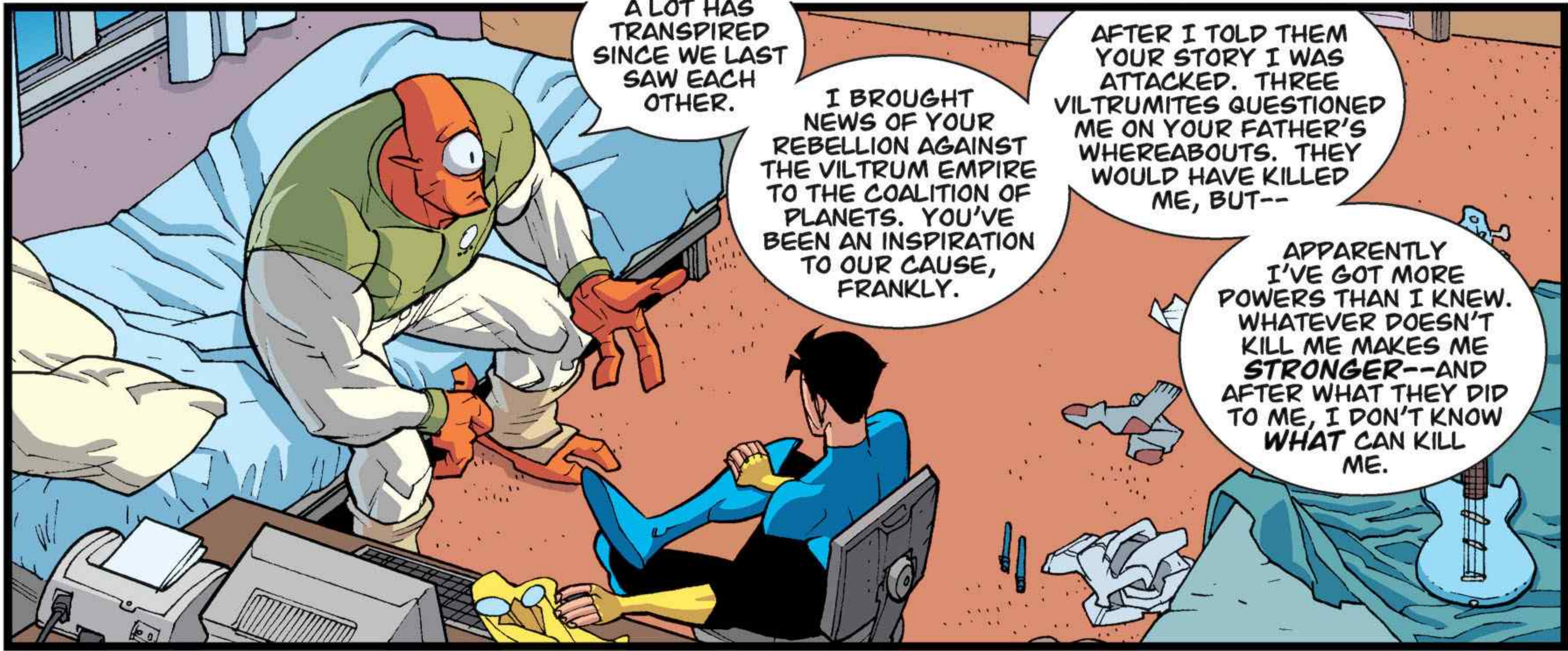


IS IT OKAY IF
SOMEONE SEES
ME HERE? I
THOUGHT YOU KEPT
YOUR ABILITIES A
SECRET FROM MOST
OF YOUR KIND.



DON'T SWEAT IT. I
COME IN THIS WINDOW
ALL THE TIME. THERE'S
HARDLY EVER ANYONE
ON THIS SIDE OF THE
BUILDING--AND THE
ODDS OF THEM LOOKING
UP AT THE RIGHT
TIME ARE
LOW.

WHAT
CAN I
DO FOR
YOU?

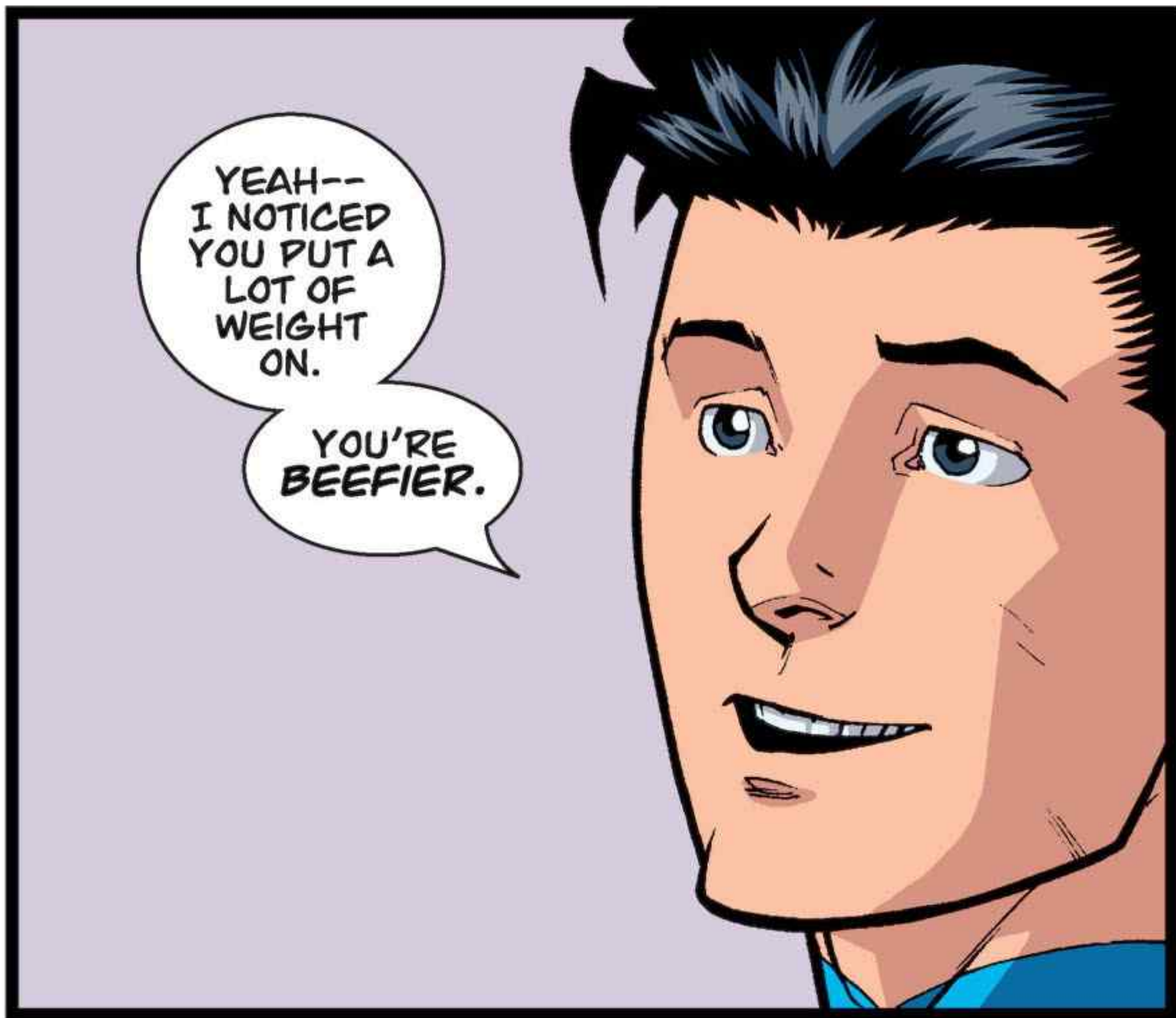


A LOT HAS
TRANSPIRED
SINCE WE LAST
SAW EACH
OTHER.

I BROUGHT
NEWS OF YOUR
REBELLION AGAINST
THE VILTRUM EMPIRE
TO THE COALITION OF
PLANETS. YOU'VE
BEEN AN INSPIRATION
TO OUR CAUSE,
FRANKLY.

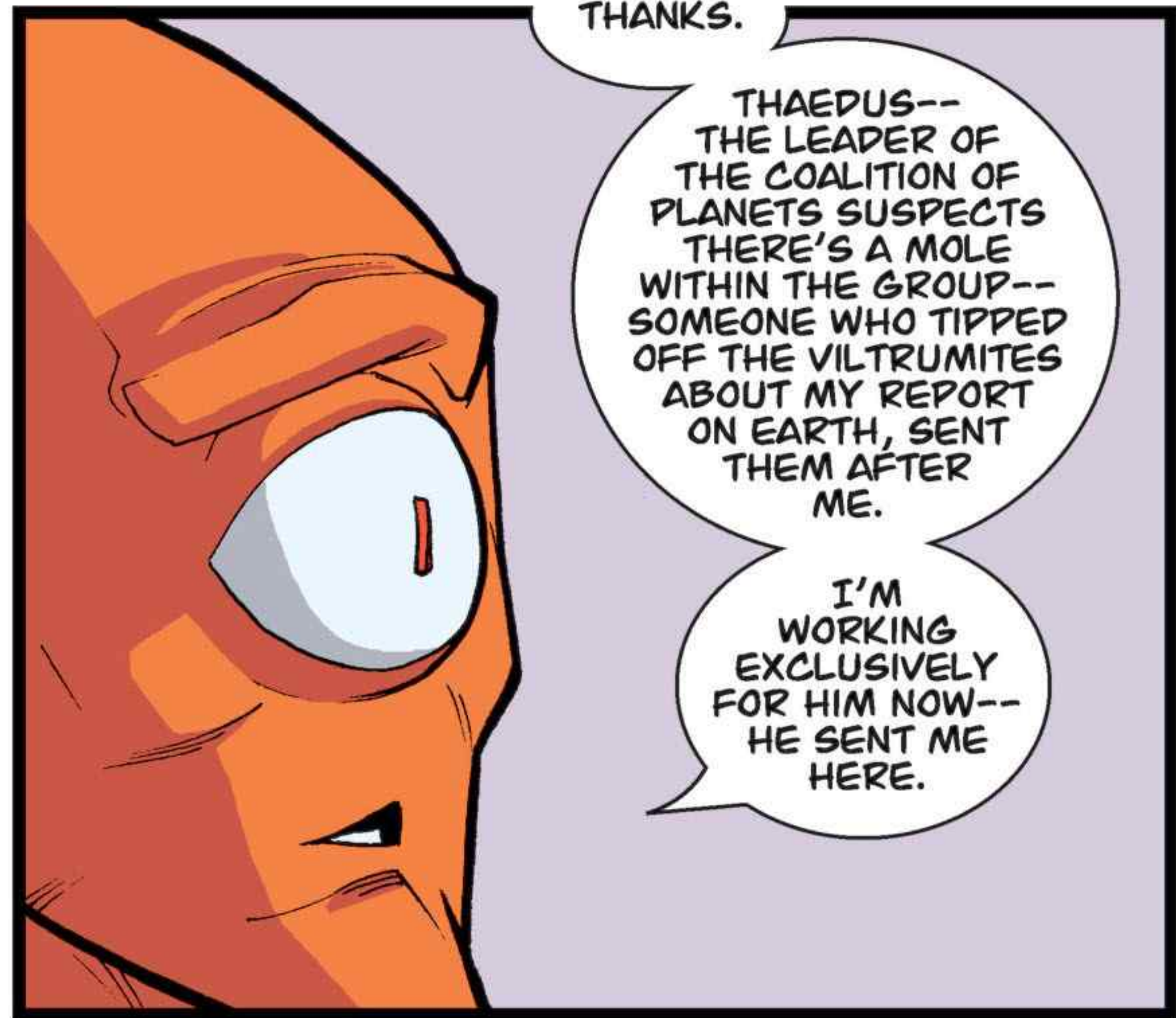
AFTER I TOLD THEM
YOUR STORY I WAS
ATTACKED. THREE
VILTRUMITES QUESTIONED
ME ON YOUR FATHER'S
WHEREABOUTS. THEY
WOULD HAVE KILLED
ME, BUT--

APPARENTLY
I'VE GOT MORE
POWERS THAN I KNEW.
WHATEVER DOESN'T
KILL ME MAKES ME
STRONGER--AND
AFTER WHAT THEY DID
TO ME, I DON'T KNOW
WHAT CAN KILL
ME.



YEAH--
I NOTICED
YOU PUT A
LOT OF
WEIGHT
ON.

YOU'RE
BEEFIER.



THANKS.

THAEDUS--
THE LEADER OF
THE COALITION OF
PLANETS SUSPECTS
THERE'S A MOLE
WITHIN THE GROUP--
SOMEONE WHO TIPPED
OFF THE VILTRUMITES
ABOUT MY REPORT
ON EARTH, SENT
THEM AFTER
ME.

I'M
WORKING
EXCLUSIVELY
FOR HIM NOW--
HE SENT ME
HERE.

SO, THAEDUS IS THE GUY IN CHARGE THERE? HE RUNS THE COALITION OF PLANETS. WHY DID HE SEND YOU HERE?

FOR YOU.

HE WANTS ME TO BRING YOU BACK TO TALESRIA, TO MEET WITH HIM. IF YOU'D LIKE TO PACK SOME THINGS--WE COULD--

WHAT?!

NO! NO WAY-- I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

YOU'VE GOT NO IDEA WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH RECENTLY. I'M NOT GOING OUT INTO SPACE AGAIN-- NO WAY. I--SPACE SUCKS.

I'VE BEEN OUT IN SPACE MORE THAN I'VE BEEN ON THIS PLANET IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS. I JUST BROKE UP WITH MY GIRLFRIEND--WHO I REALLY DID LIKE-- BECAUSE I'M GONE SO MUCH. I NEVER GET TO SEE MY MOM.

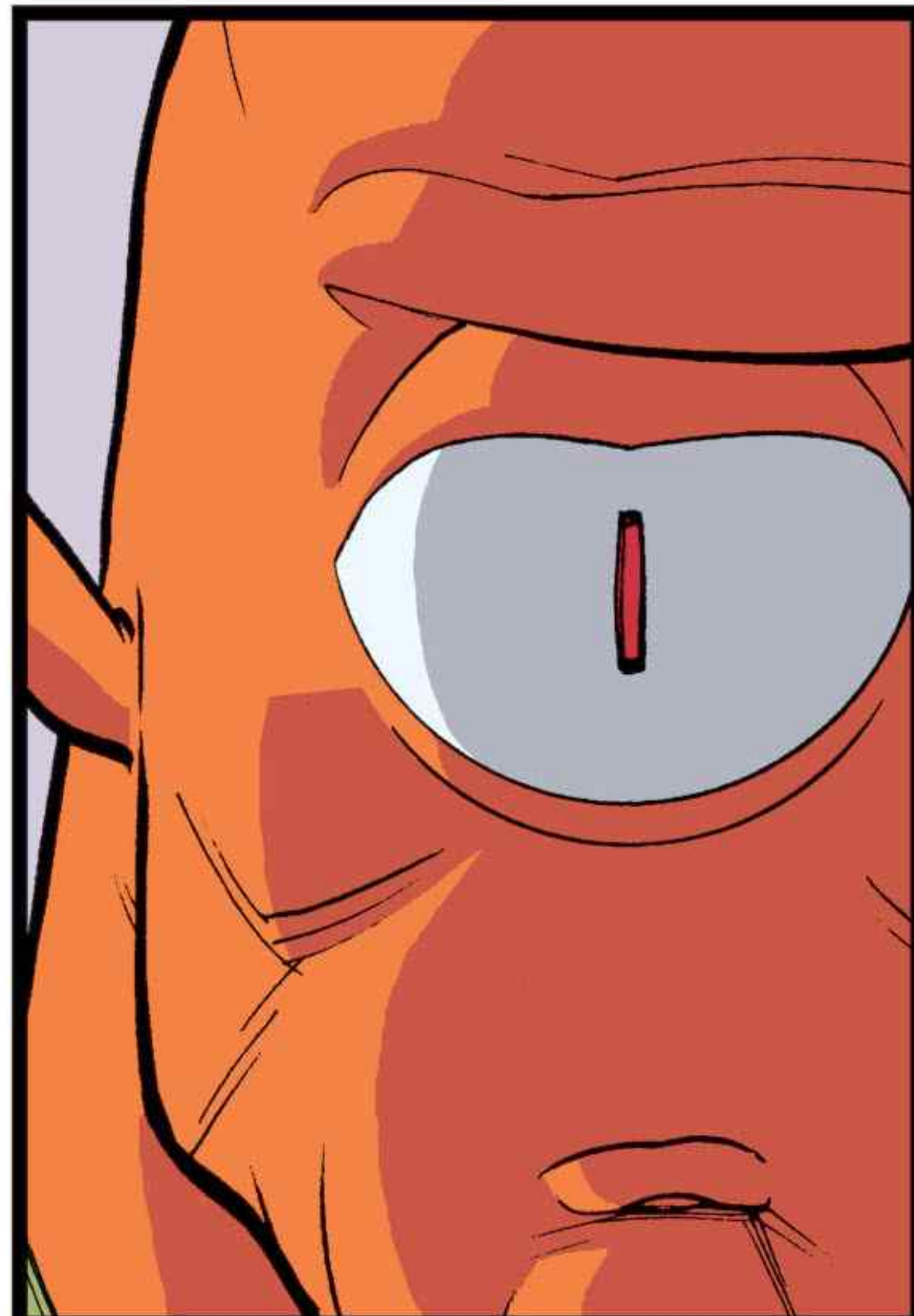
MY LITTLE BROTHER JUST GOT POWERS AND I--

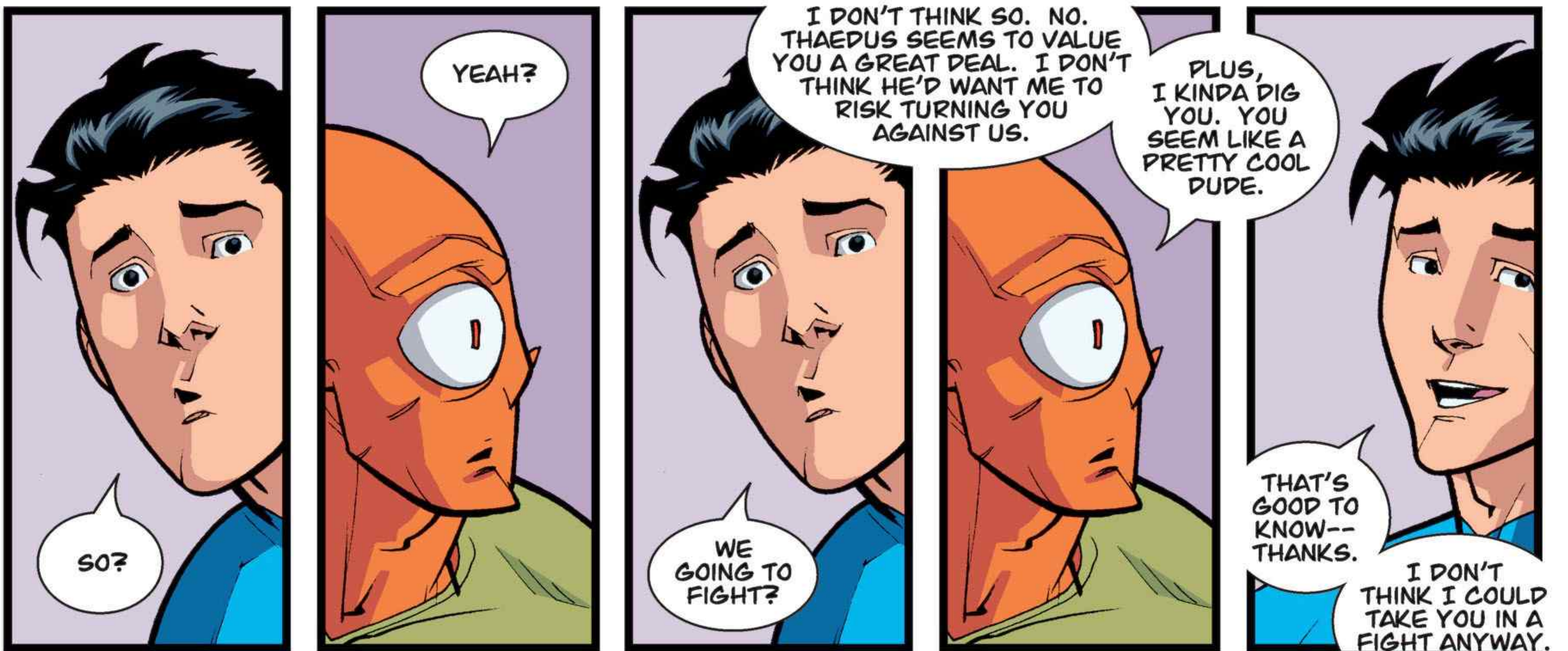
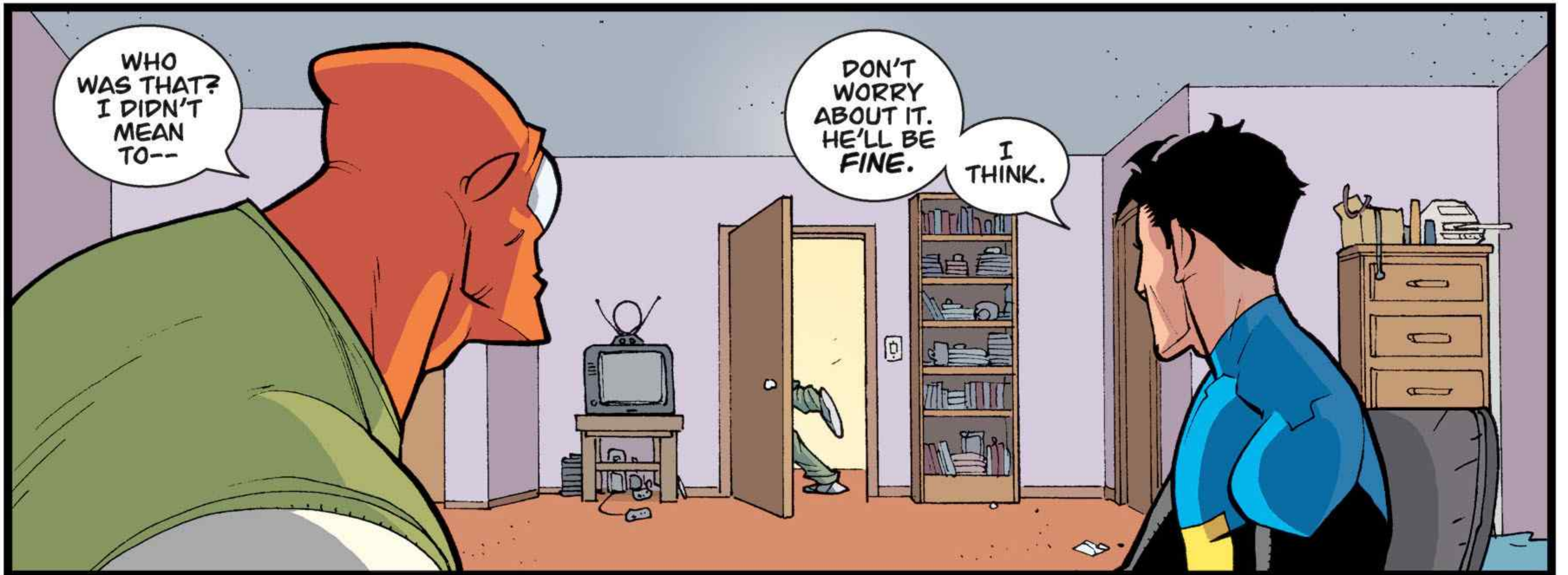
NO. THERE'S NO WAY I'M GOING. I'M SORRY ALLEN, BUT I'D FIGHT YOU BEFORE I LET YOU TAKE ME.

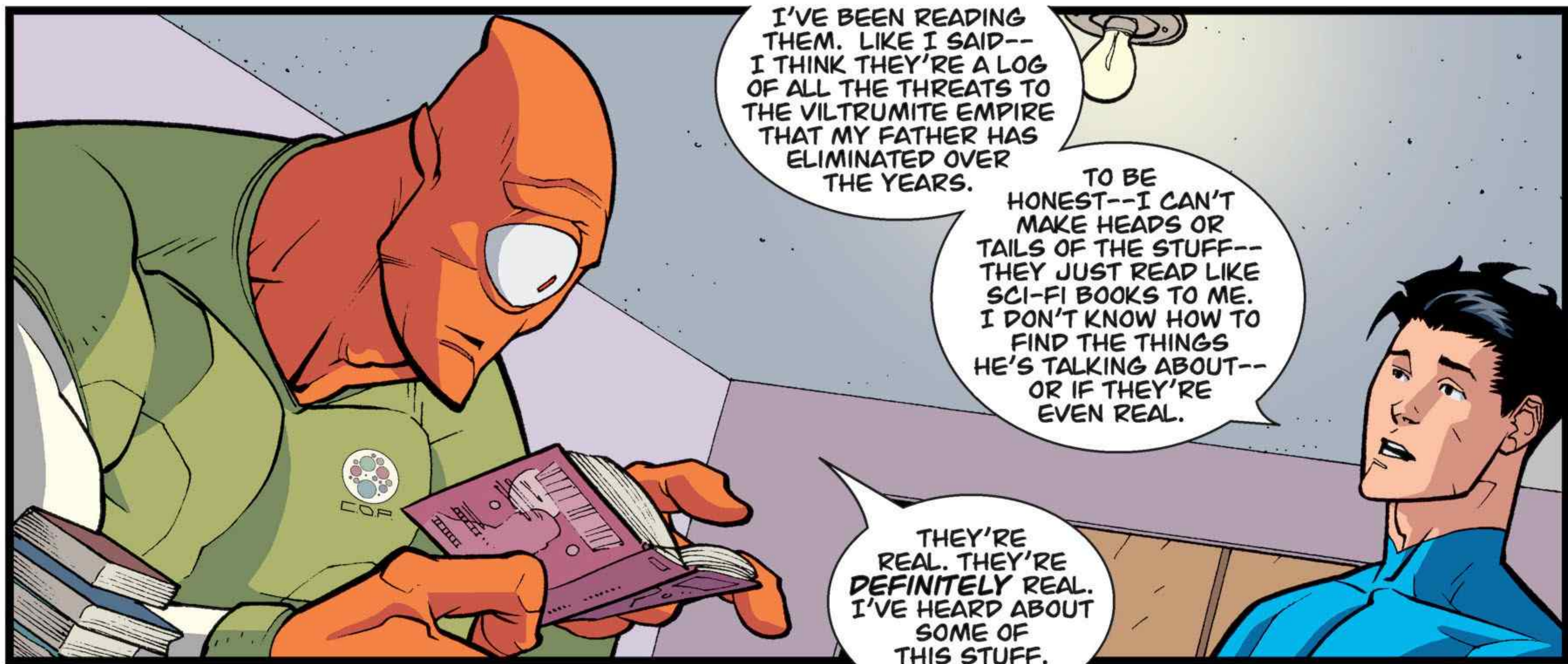
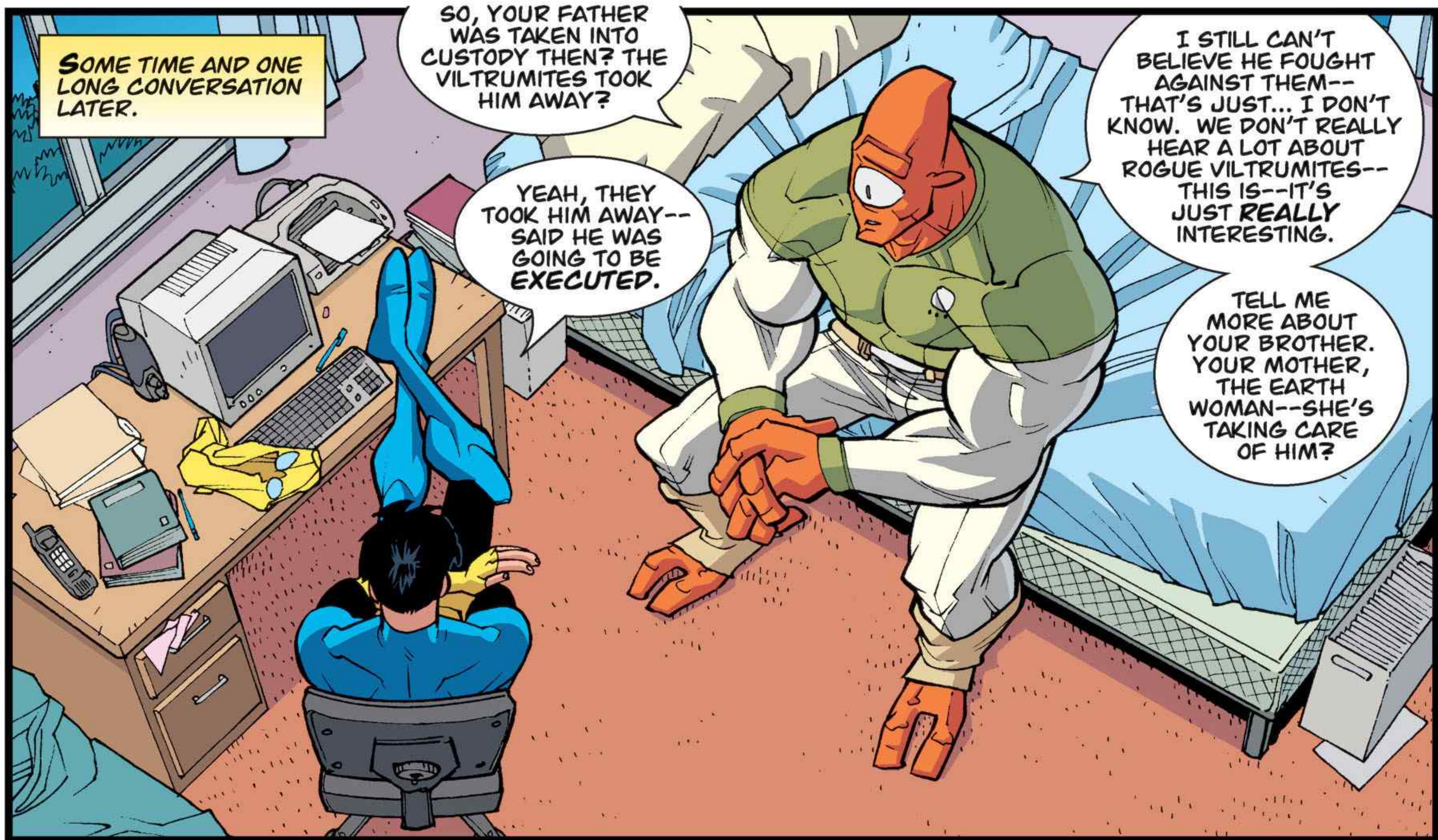


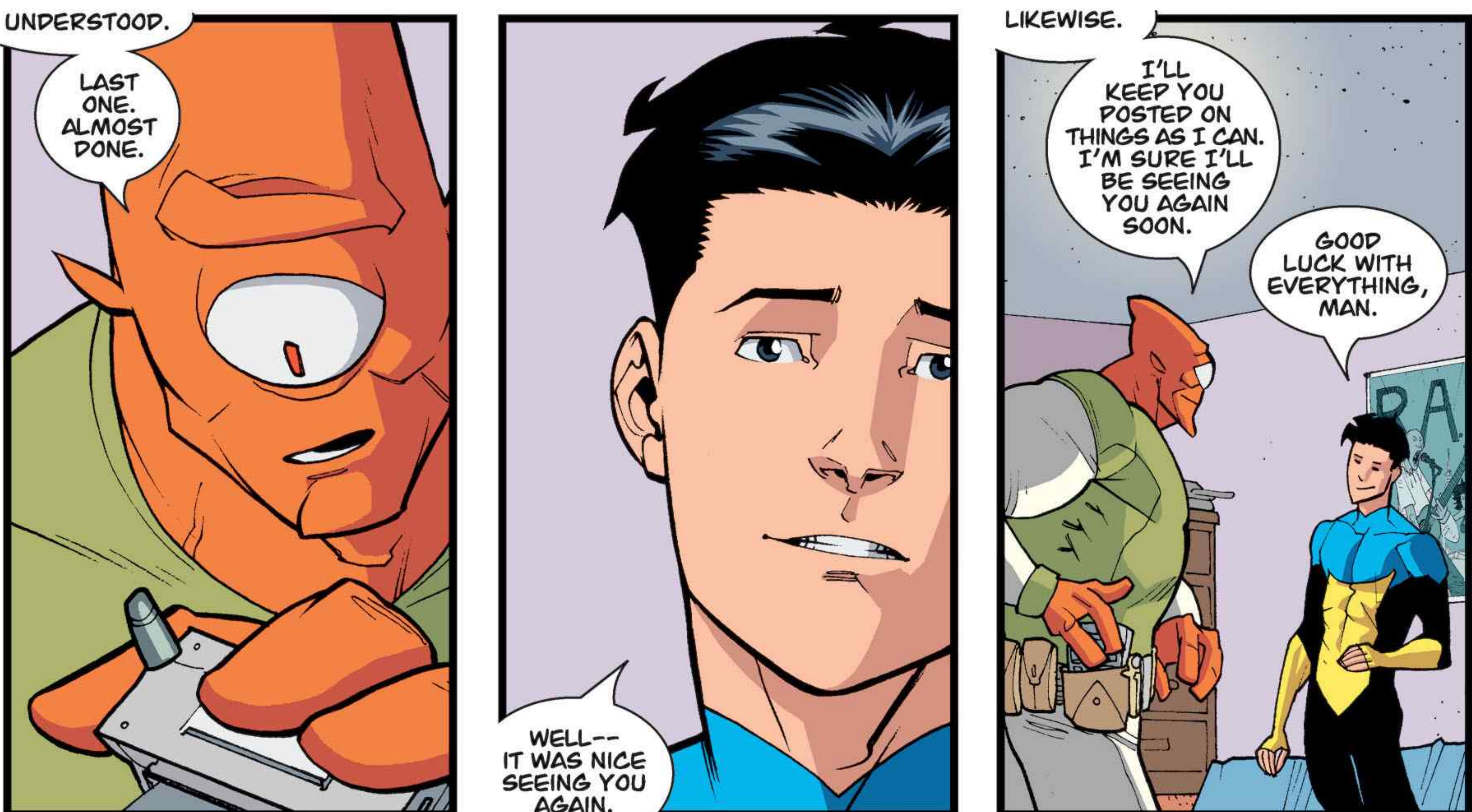
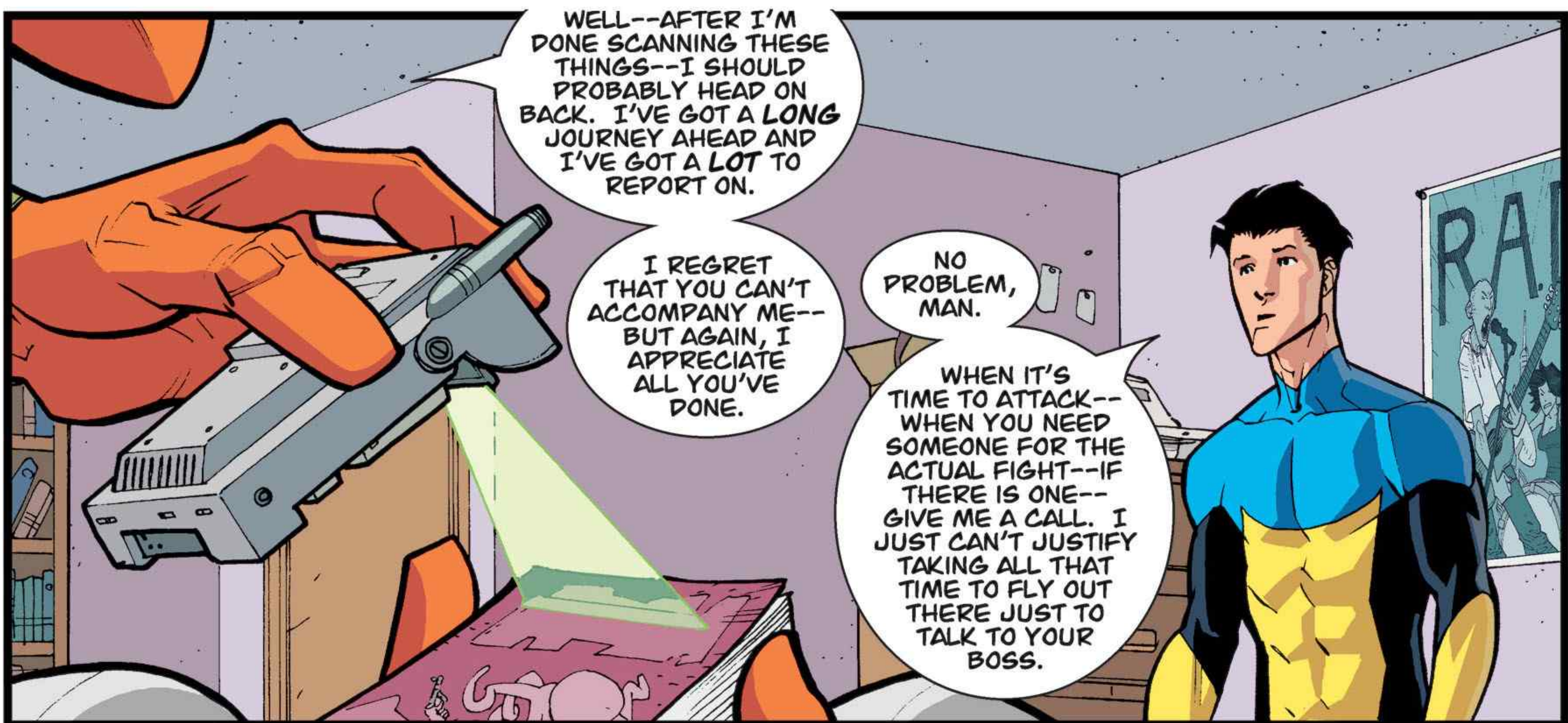
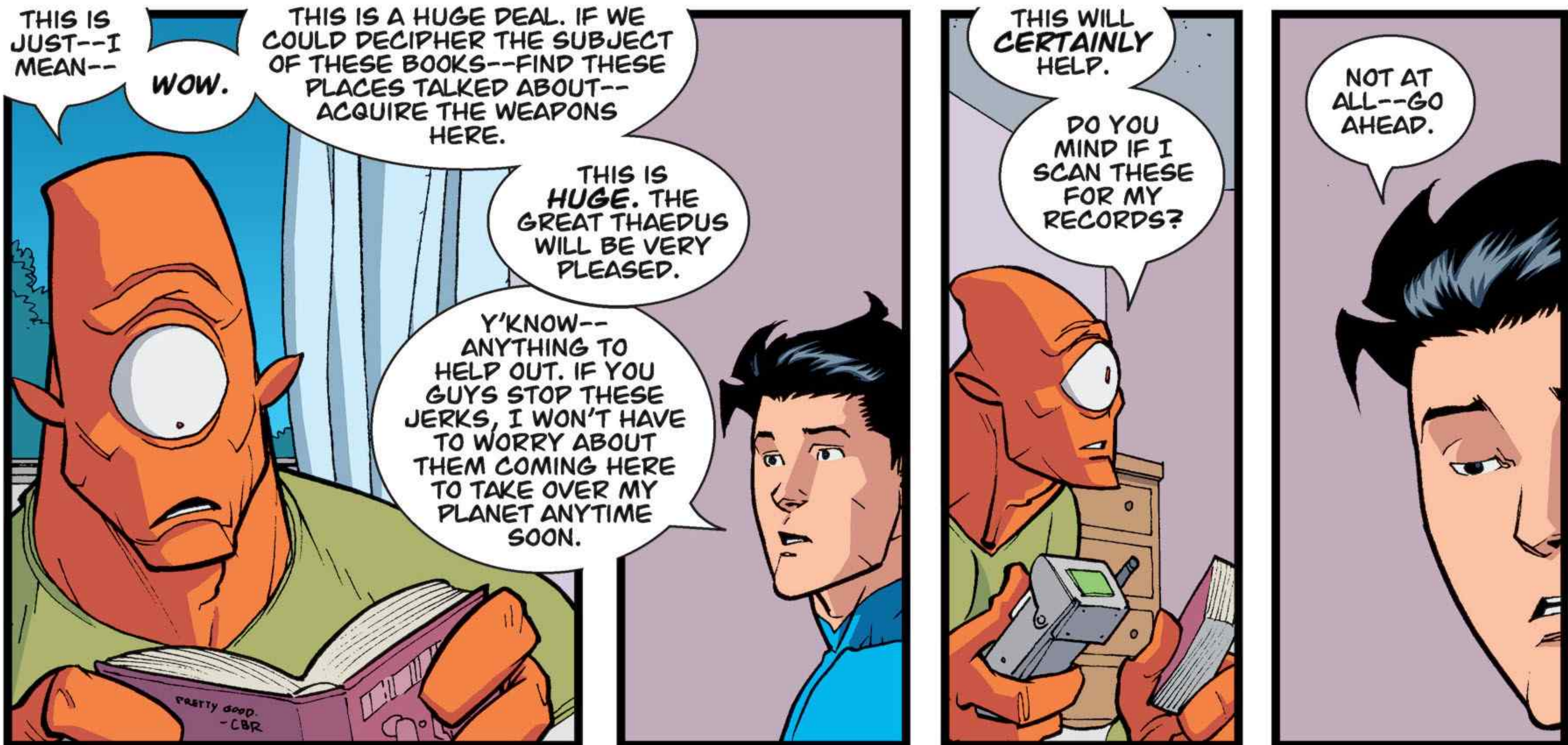
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO MAKE ME FIGHT YOU...

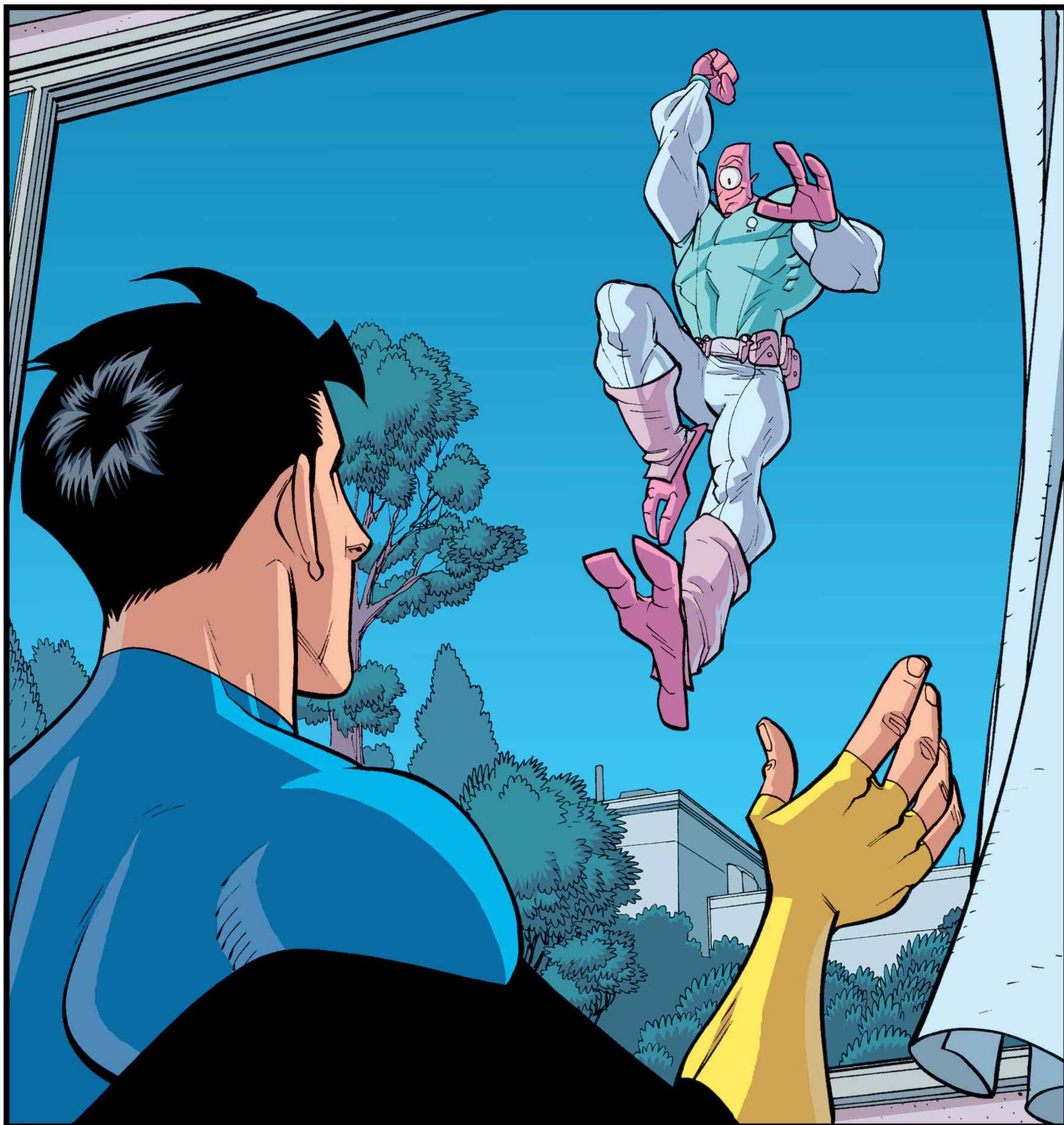
...ARE YOU?













UTAH, THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN BASE OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE GLOBE.



I WAS IN A BLIND RAGE-- I COULDN'T-- IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO STOP MYSELF.

I WAS COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL.

HAD IT BEEN A DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCE-- HAD I NOT BEEN ALONE, SOMEONE COULD HAVE BEEN HURT.

THAT IS UNACCEPTABLE.



I UNDERSTAND. LOOK, WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS FOR YEARS. I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU LIKE THIS.

IF YOU NEED SOME TIME-- TAKE SOME TIME.

NO--YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I'VE NEVER FELT LIKE THIS ABOUT SOMEONE BEFORE. I DON'T THINK I AM EVER GOING TO GET OVER THIS. IT'S TIME--IT'S MY TIME TO END THIS.

I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER LEAD THE GUARDIANS OF THE GLOBE AGAIN.

CALL IT A TEMPORARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM THE TEAM IF YOU WISH--BUT I DON'T THINK I'M COMING BACK.



I'M DONE.



THERESA, PLEASE SCHEDULE A MEETING WITH ROBOT FOR MY EARLIEST POSSIBLE SLOT.

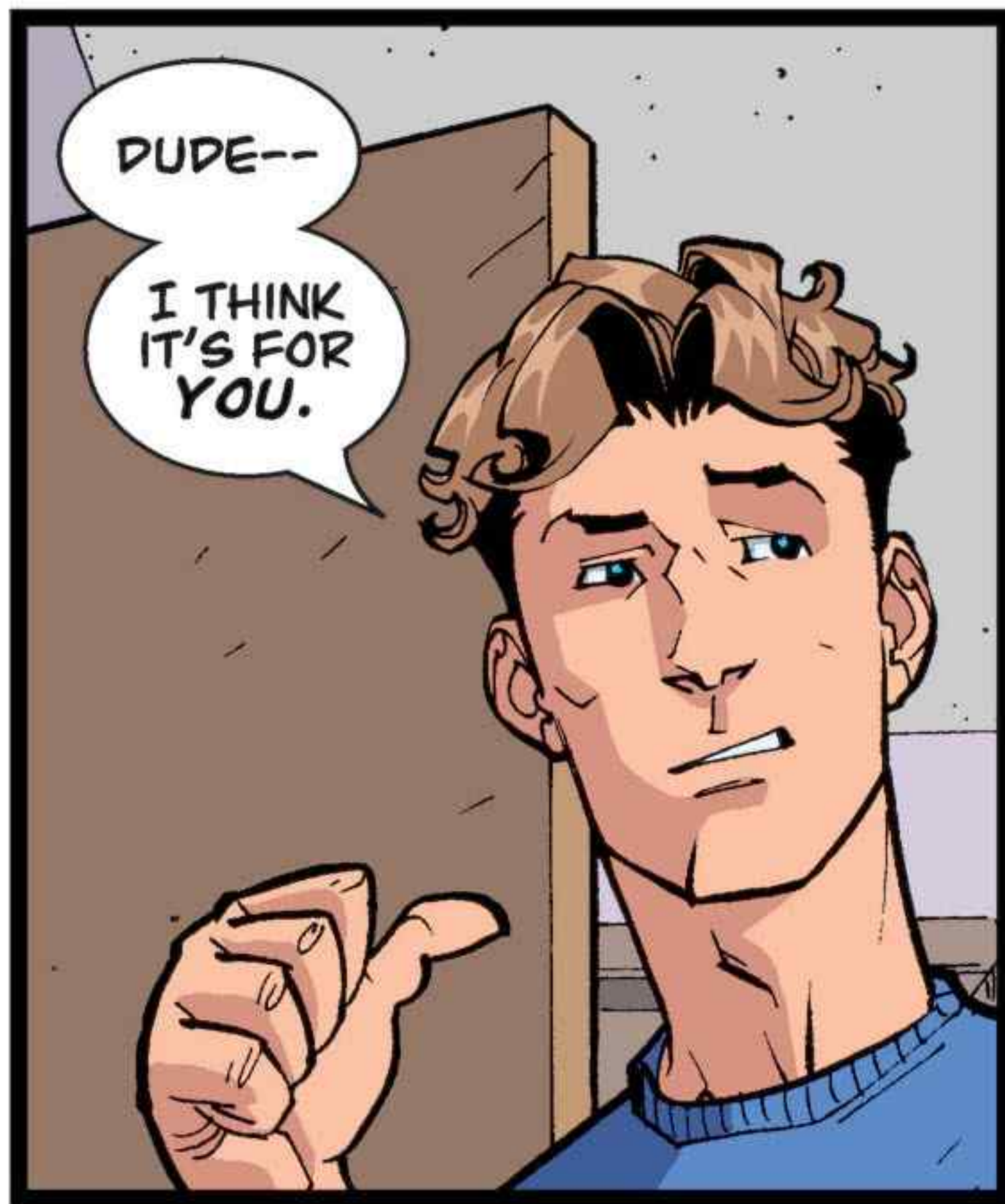
THANK YOU.



TELL HIM HIS OLD POSITION JUST OPENED UP.

I WANT TO GIVE HIM ANOTHER CHANCE.

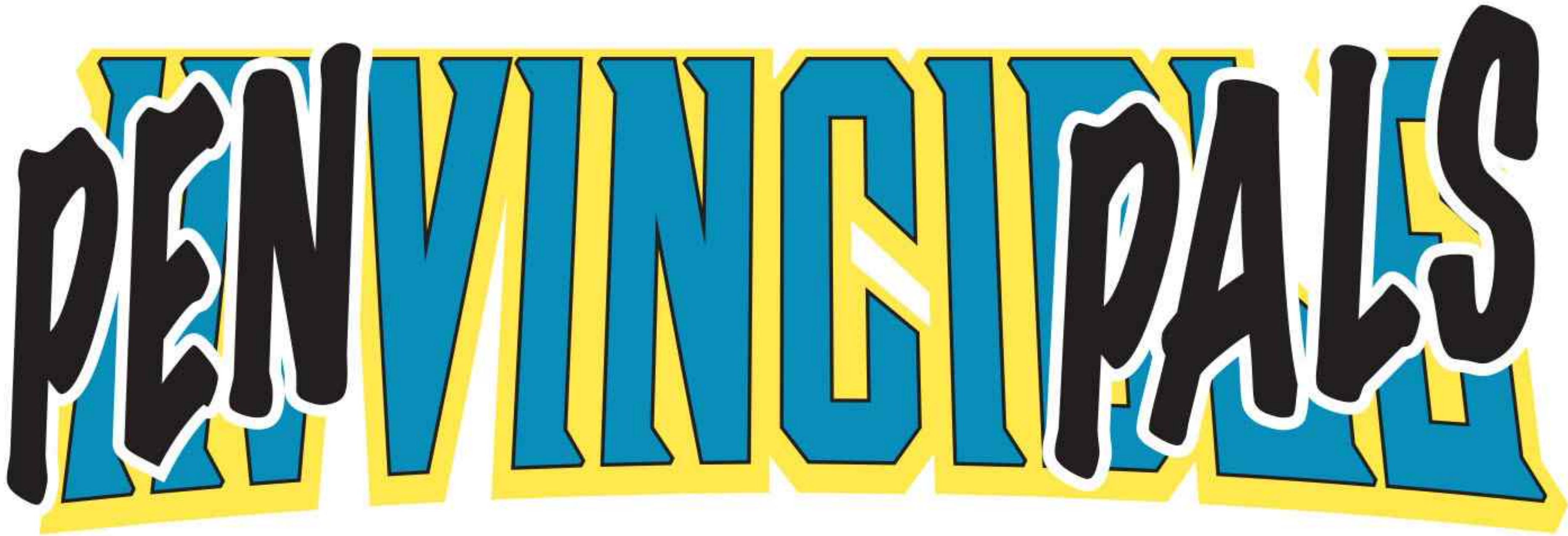




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No letters column in issue 42... sorry about that. I feel like I haven't gotten to talk to you chaps (and chapettes) in a while.

First off I want to thank David Campbell for writing that recap of the series that ran in issue 42. David was one of the writers on the Official Handbook of the Invincible universe, so you know he knows his stuff. It was a huge help not having to write that thing myself.

Thanks, David!

With that out of the way--let's answer some mail!

Mr. Kirkman,

I'll make this as short as I can because I know you're a busy guy with a pretty packed schedule:

PLEASE stop having your characters say "Jesus" every time they're surprised or in disgust. I know you don't do it as much as Erik Larsen has in his books (I just read Savage Dragon archives #1 and man...practically every other page had it), but I still find it very offensive and I plan to stop buying your book if I continue to see it. I'm only one reader, so I'm sure this won't make a significant dent in your bottom line, but still, I cannot support this.

People in real life say it. I say it... I'm sorry if it offends you but if you can't tolerate even that, I don't understand how you've made it this long. Honestly, I'm sure Jesus doesn't mind. Why should you?

You have always written a great comic book with interesting characters and situations. Having your characters say these things adds absolutely nothing to the story. There are dozens of expressions for surprise and disgust that can be used that don't involve blasphemy, and they can be done without looking childish or silly.

It's my opinion that if you were to clean up the dialogue in your book, it would be more accessible to a wider audience. There would be virtually no stopping you at that point and Invincible would take its place alongside Superman, Batman, and Spider-Man in popular culture.

Finally, if for no other reason than what I said, at least stop doing it for the simple reason that ERIK LARSEN does it all the time!!! After reading his Savage Dragon archives and things you've said in past letter columns, it's pretty clear that he's a big influence. It makes it look like you're just carbon-copying his style and that you don't really have one of your own.

Anyways, I thank you for taking the time to read this. I really do appreciate it. Other than that obvious gripe, you and your team are incredibly talented and deserve to be recognized as some of the industry's finest.

Robert Hustwick

Jesus, that's a flattering letter!

Seriously, I don't mean to blatantly ignore your request but "Saying the Lord's name in vain" always seemed to me like one of those rules in the bible that was a bit out dated and kinda silly. I mean, is that really a big issue? Murder? I agree with that one. All the seven deadlys, really... that all makes sense. But cussing? Doesn't the big J, and his father have more important things to worry about? And using the word "Jesus!" as an exclamation seems like a petty complaint, too. I could argue any of these characters are actually calling out for Jesus... for help or something. That'd be okay, right? Just imagine that they're really saying "Jesus, help me!" or something.

Yo, Robert Dude!

My name is rob and I am 35 years old and its the tenth or twelfth time I've written to a comic book.

Everything about issue 40 was wicked sweet! Ryan just gets better with every issue and Bill's colors jump right off the page! For real, dude! You better be real proud, this book is Gold! I never gave these guys props once in any of my letters for shame on me :(ok here are some reader friendly questions...

1. Is it true your wife is writing comics?I heard something about a book called "wedlock"?

You sir, have me confused with my good friend Scott Kurtz who is doing said book with his wife (soon to be released... in the future). You're probably mistaken because Scott mentioned it on an episode of Fanboy Radio where I was also the guest... and we both have pretty girly voices. (Here's a hint for next time--I sound like a redneck.)

2. Has anyone ever asked you if you were a clone of john byrne? You look like you could be his son.

Apparently I look like anyone who has a beard's son. It happens.

3.Brit all colored was the best, any plans for any new stories?

Yes. BRIT: THE SERIES starts in AUGUST 2007, written by Bruce Brown, art by Cliff Rathburn and it's edited and overseen by ME.

4. What about St. Michael will he get the color treatment?

Possibly. It's still up in the air at this moment.

5. Did you write a wrestling comic? reprint it?please

Reprint it? It was never printed... and never will be. I drew it... it's terrible. I don't even like to show it to people. Trust me... you DON'T want to see it.

6. I'm still waiting for the invincible annual should i continue to wait?

Maybe... probably not.

Keep up the great work and keep Bill and Ryan happy these guys rule! can't wait for Wolf-Man!

Rob Steal

You and me both, chum. By now you should have a copy of The Astounding Wolf-Man #1... I'd love to hear what you think!

Messrs. Kirkman, Ottley, Crabtree, Wooton

I'm a long time comic reader who gave up writing letters to comics many years ago since they never got printed. So this would be a first (HINTHINT). Sorry. Anyways, it's also been a while since I read a comic that compelled me to bother trying again!

I'm a late comer to your work, Robert. I'm too damn picky, truth be told, and I hate wasting my hard earned money on something that just doesn't stand up to re-reading--or, sometimes first-time-throughs!! I finally picked up TWD late in the series due to recommendations from the right people. PHENOMENAL, by the way, but I'll address that in my letter to The Dead! In those letter cols I kept hearing about Invincible. Not being much of a capes and costumes reader anymore, I was skeptical. Finally, I succumbed to the overwhelming praise and the fact that I kept reading/hearing that you were doing something different. It also helped that I had some faith in your ability to tell a great story from TWD.

In a nutshell, I'm glad that I gave in. To be honest, I typically don't like to read "all ages" type fare because I'm 36 and prefer more creative, twisted, interesting, and sophisticated comics. I always want kids to be able to have the stories that I had when I was growing up (although Frank Miller's work on Daredevil was my fave!), but, frankly, I'm not a kid anymore! When someone gets punched, I want to see blood, characters should die, etc. because that's more realistic and easier to engage. It's hard to get into a story when you don't feel as though anyone is truly in peril. Invincible--to the whole creative team's credit--is able, somehow, to embrace the pure, innocent joy of classic superhero stories while at the same time incorporating realistic, brutal sequences. Issue #40 is a perfect example! You've got bright colors, characters in danger, discussing what they're going to do, using their powers; however, you also have that big, orange dude (sorry, don't know the name!) literally tearing Kate's clones apart, eating Ray, and chomping Rex's

arm, followed by an awesome head explosion. This, my friend, is great stuff! Even the “B story” of Amber and Gary is brilliant because it’s not cheesy crap; we’ve grown to care about what happens here. Kudos to Ryan Ottley and Bill Crabtree for making every panel POP! I can’t imagine how this comic could look any better! And, of course, your ability to drop plot threads and pick them up 20 issues later demonstrates to me that you know who you are as a storyteller, Robert, and you respect those that you’re writing for. Just stating facts.

I could go on and on, but I’d like to add a few numbered questions to increase my chances of getting printed:

1. Are there future plans to develop Cecil’s character more? I was happy to see you punch a few holes in the “benevolent governmental agent” facade with his private conversation with D.A., but I’m hoping for more.

There’s more.

2. What is the current status on the movie, especially with the title “Invincible” now taken?

Who knows. Movie stuff is pretty much out of my hands. I’m writing the screenplay but past that I’m kinda in the dark.

3. Do you plan to write this title--as you’ve said with TWD--until you’re an old man? If so, make sure you keep Ryan, Bill and Rus around!

I’ll keep everyone around as long as I can. I have no plans to leave this title at any point just yet. But with TWD, I want to end it at some point in the far future (after 300 or so, if I make it that long). I’d like to see Invincible last past my death. I’d love to write 300 or more issues of this too... but I want to see it carry on to other people. I think that’d be awesome. You may disagree.

4. Will Rick have some lasting effects from having been a Reaniman? Quite a traumatic experience to just shrug off, eh?

Oh, he didn’t just shrug it off. Stay tuned.

Thanks for your time! I anxiously await the arrival of The Wolf Man! Thanks to all of you for reassuring me that great stories can still be told in this genre!!

Jonathan Radmer

By now you should have a copy of The Astounding Wolf-Man #1... I’d love to hear what you think!

Dear Captain Kirkman,

Surprise, surprise. This issue was--great!! Love the Lizard League, too bad they all got wasted. I think you, and really a lot of people, need to work on your cliffhanger endings; course, time was we used to actually get AN ending to an issue...remember that?

Issues 38-41 was a continuing story, hence the issues continuing, without ending cliffhangers.

Lot of blood and gore this issue. Just as much as a Shadowline comic come to think of it. Usually that kinda stuff is a turn off for me, but, maybe I’m getting used to it.

How come it always takes a funeral to get Savage Dragon, SuperPatriot, Mighty Man and others to appear in these pages? And it was in the Capes backup feature at that! Capes is too much of a cartoon, said it b4 and I’ll say it again. There’s Way too many characters to keep track of.

I think I pay attention enough to these issues; I don’t really reread comics very often. I think Invincible could’ve taken out a lot more of the Sequids by using his energy powers in this ish. Would’ve beaten standing around a lot.

This is a joke about not rereading the books, right? If so... funny.

A lot of character identification takes place by calling each other by name--and I think you could do a better job of that too. So how Does Image make enough money without ads and stuff?--or are you guys tired of answering that question? This was the best Invincible in quite some time really!

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Image books make money from sales of the books. The founders of Image weren’t big on ads breaking up the stories and frankly, I agree with them. Would you rather have some kind of terrifying TRUTH ad with eyes sewn shut staring at you while you sit on the toilet reading this thing? I’d rather not.

Glad you liked this issue... at least... partially.

YE GODS!

You like number-list-letters eh? Okay. Can do that.

1) Don’t listen to Andrew J. Shaw. I love all the ongoing subplots, and you know, if I get lost along the way, I can always go back and reread the earlier issues. I mean, if the comic was good enough to buy in the first place, it’s good enough to reread, right?

Sure, and I usually try to mention things again in at least a small way so you can understand things. I think you can read 38-41 and understand them just fine without going back and reading issue 18. I could be wrong, but I don’t think I am.

2) That said, a bit of a Previously... blurb on the inside front cover wouldn’t be the worst thing in the world.

I don’t disagree... I just don’t like them myself. I did cave and put them in The Walking Dead... maybe I’ll do that in this book too... we’ll see.

3) But don’t listen to Andrew J. Shaw. He doesn’t know who Battle Beast is, so clearly he’s deranged in some way.

Clearly.

4) If Capes is ending, does that mean we’re going to see more Hector Plasm?

I wish.

5) I thought Astounding Wolf-Man was going to just be a FCBD thing, but your letters page in #40 implies that it’s ongoing. Are we truly to be blessed by funky lycanthropic action on a more regular basis?

Yes! It is an ongoing series!

6) That’s it actually. Cheers for your time, Kirkmanatron!

- kelvin green

Cheers to you too, mate!

Hi Robert,

I thought issue #29 was the bloodiest issue of Invincible... you sure topped it with #40! That was nasty!

Call me skeptic, but I find it hard to believe that Dupli-Kate and Shrinking Ray are dead... there has to be a copy of her floating around somewhere (can anyone say Madrox?). Also, when Komodo Dragon swallowed S-R, I’m left to assume that he was swallowed whole. There was no “crunch” sound or chewing showed. He could shrink smaller and crawl out of the gaping hole in K-D’s neck (yuk).

Or... maybe they’re both dead. Or maybe just one of them is. The possibilities are endless.

The Lizard League seems to be a contender to become one of Mark’s top foes. I love how they remind me of the old Serpent Squad/Serpent Society.

Who?

I wonder how long it will take for Rex to turn? (oops, wrong book!)

Oh, and kirkmania.com is still not running! I’ve been bugging you for months about it!

Thanks for the great read every issue!
Roch Vaillancourt

My website will be up in some form before the end of 2007. For real this time. I really need to get that thing up before my career in comics is over. I probably don’t have much time left!

Mr. Kirkman,

I’ve been reading comics since I was a kid, I’m 24 now but never have I wanted to actually write to one until this great book came into my life. I always put it off cuz I really didn’t have anything to say or ask, but with you saying that CAPES is coming to an end, now I do.

Give the back-up space to Rex Splode, please?

Pretty please?

Besides Eve, Rex is one of my favorite supporting characters in the whole Invincible universe. He’s got cool powers, a wise-crackin attitude and an awesome backstory that is just ripe with stories to be told (seriously, he’s been a government op since he was kid, Rex has got so much potential as a character.)

I'm happy with his showings in both the battles with the lizard league and the octo-boss, I felt that it showed how cool Rex could be. Sure, he's a jerk most of the time, but at the end of the day he knows what he's doing and can be counted on when the going gets tough.

I dig him, I'm sure I'm not the only one.

“Tales of Rex Splode” back up, make it so Kirkman.

Or a mini-series, that'd be cool too.

Sincerely,
Sketch Sanchez

You know, I'd love to do stuff like that but for now at least, CAPES was a whole lotta extra work for me and I'm not looking to heap on more just yet. Maybe in the future?

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Long time reader (issue 8!), fan (I even have the HeroClix!) and such, but first time (I think) writing in. I have a semi-response to Mr. Shaw's letter this month, regarding what earns Invincible its place of prominence on my monthly comics reading list. I'll even make it numbered, just for you, because I know you love that so.

1.) Probably my single favorite thing about Invincible (as a series) is the scope. With all the zig-zag back-and-forth plotting, it reads like a cross-over mega-event from one of the Big Two that you'd normally have to buy six books just to pretend to follow, and then spend another three hours on the internet trying to figure out the bits where they got it wrong internally. Except Invincible is just you, Ryan, Bill, and Rus- a finely-honed precision unit. Every month, like clockwork. So for just one low monthly fee, I get all the action, intrigue, romance, and continuity wankery of, say, Teen Titans or JSA, without having to also buy every separate book featuring each separate character. I appreciate this.

2.) (This is also the reason I like Ultimate X-Men, and Ultimate Marvel in general. Good job on that, by the by- I didn't think anyone could fill Mr. Vaughan's shoes, but you're getting more solid on that book with every issue. Love the way you're picking up on things that other writers laid down way earlier in the book- that not only enhances my reading pleasure as a long-time fan of that series, but it keeps the continuity nice and clean for other writers later. Way to be a team player! This, in turn, is likely to keep the book a smooth and satisfying read for time to come.).

3.) That said, I do kinda miss the early days when the book was all about Mark. I love the expanded universe you've created- and call this issue "camping", because it was INTENSE- but I'm a big believer in re-investing in the base levels of super-hero mythologies, to give weight to the big moments. The bloodbath in the nuclear silo this issue made the fight against the Sequids in the giant spaceship seem less exciting, in a way. The character moment with Amber was the only chance we had to breathe all issue long! I guess you're working more as a unified-series than individual-issue, though. That's cool too. Invincible, astonishingly, holds up pretty well either way (and it makes me want to buy all the collections, you sly dog).

Future storylines will focus on Mark more and more as time goes on.

4.) The HeroClix are pretty awesome, by the way. The sculpts are great, Omni-Man's a total beast, and the William Clockwell bystander token cracked me up- I didn't know that was going to be in there! Finally, a chance to re-enact the series' greatest running gag on the HeroClix board. Only problem? Only seven! I was hoping for Rex Splode so hard! And I don't think they understood Atom Eve's powers too well when they designed her dial... oh well, I'm still glad I own them. If you're ever near D.C., email me and we can play a game.

I have no clue how to play heroclix.

5.) This is the whiny part of the letter: remember I said "bloodbath" earlier? I know you've got a proud indy-comics screw-the-comics-code tradition to uphold, but all those dead Dupli-Kates, and the chowing down on Shrinking Ray (poor dude!) and the view of Rex's stump (which oddly disturbed me more)- and Komodo Dragon's head as it exploded, and etc. etc.- it was all a bit much for me. Poor Mr. Crabtree's red crayon must be down to the nubbin by now!

I bought Bill an extra set of red crayons just for this issue.

6.) But I know you're just setting us up for next issue, which I eagerly anticipate. I have no idea how the space heroes are going to get out of their jam, but I've got twenty (cents) that says at least one Dupli-Kate stayed out of the fight until the end, just like King Lizard. Or you could go the extreme Joss Whedon route, and Rex will die, and his death will become a point of contention between Mark and Eve, who decided to give it a try now that Amber's going for Gary. But that would be kinda sad. Poor Rex.

7.) Mr. Ottley (and Mistrs Crabtree and Wooton) really did kick it up a notch

this issue. I was especially impressed with the detail on all those masses of Sequids.

8.) I've really been digging the Robot/Monster Girl sub-plot. Their predicaments are interesting, and they're so gosh-darn cute.

9.) I was going to ask when a Capes TPB might be available, but you just now answered that, so. Looking forward to that, then. I've enjoyed the back-up, but always had a bit of wondering "who are these people?"

When you read the TPB it'll be much clearer... and y'know... a few of them did show up in issue 17 and 27.

10.) I love that you have back-up stories. I loved the Benito & Nate days, love Capes, just love the whole thing. It rewards me for buying the monthly issues, which I plan to continue doing just as long as you'll keep releasing them.

Wow, this got way too long. All right, 'night then.

Yours loyally,
Robert D. Wilson

Ugh... more back-up stories, then. I'll see what I can do.

Man... what an issue. So many people died. I hope that Rex is just having some super-bad dream or something. Because, for some reason, you like numbers so much, I will number the following questions/comments.

I love how every letter writer now seems to begrudgingly number things like it's such a crappy thing. "Well, YOU like them..." am I the only one who reads letters columns and skips to the numbered questions? I guess those of you who do that wouldn't be reading this, then, huh? Well... screw you!

1) Will we ever see any more of Damien Darkblood demon detective? He is such a great character, and we haven't heard from him in a while.

Eventually.

2) Way to go Robert. You made Rex into such a likeable character. I used to hate him because he was such a dirtbag, but now he is one of my favourite characters.

Woo hoo! And thanks.

3) I love the issues you have with voice bubbles (dialogue baloons?) on the covers. They give such a 60's comics feel to them. My personal favourite is the "One side kiddo! This looks like a job for the Guardians of the Globe!" Great cover.

That was Kurt Busiek's idea--I swear. As I recall, he pretty much wrote that word balloon.

4) Will we ever see any Invincible t-shirts or action figures? Also, there is a poster out, right? If so, that thing is harder to find than the PS3!

There are t-shirts AND posters... and as far as I know they're BOTH available for order if you just ask your retailer to order them for you.

5) The first hardcover (the ultimate collection vol. 1) would make the perfect movie. Just might need to slim down on some things, I don't know what. And that ending is classic ("What are you gonna do now?" "I don't know, finish high school, I guess"!)

Thanks.

6) And last, I think that for Omni-Man, the perfect actor would be none other than Bruce Campbell. That's just my opinion, don't tear my head off. Thanks.

I do love me some Bruce Campbell... but then again, who doesn't?

Thank you for listening to my yammering. Keep up the fantastic work! -Geoff R. Wenzlau

I'll see what I can do.

And with that, my friends, we bring this issue to a close.

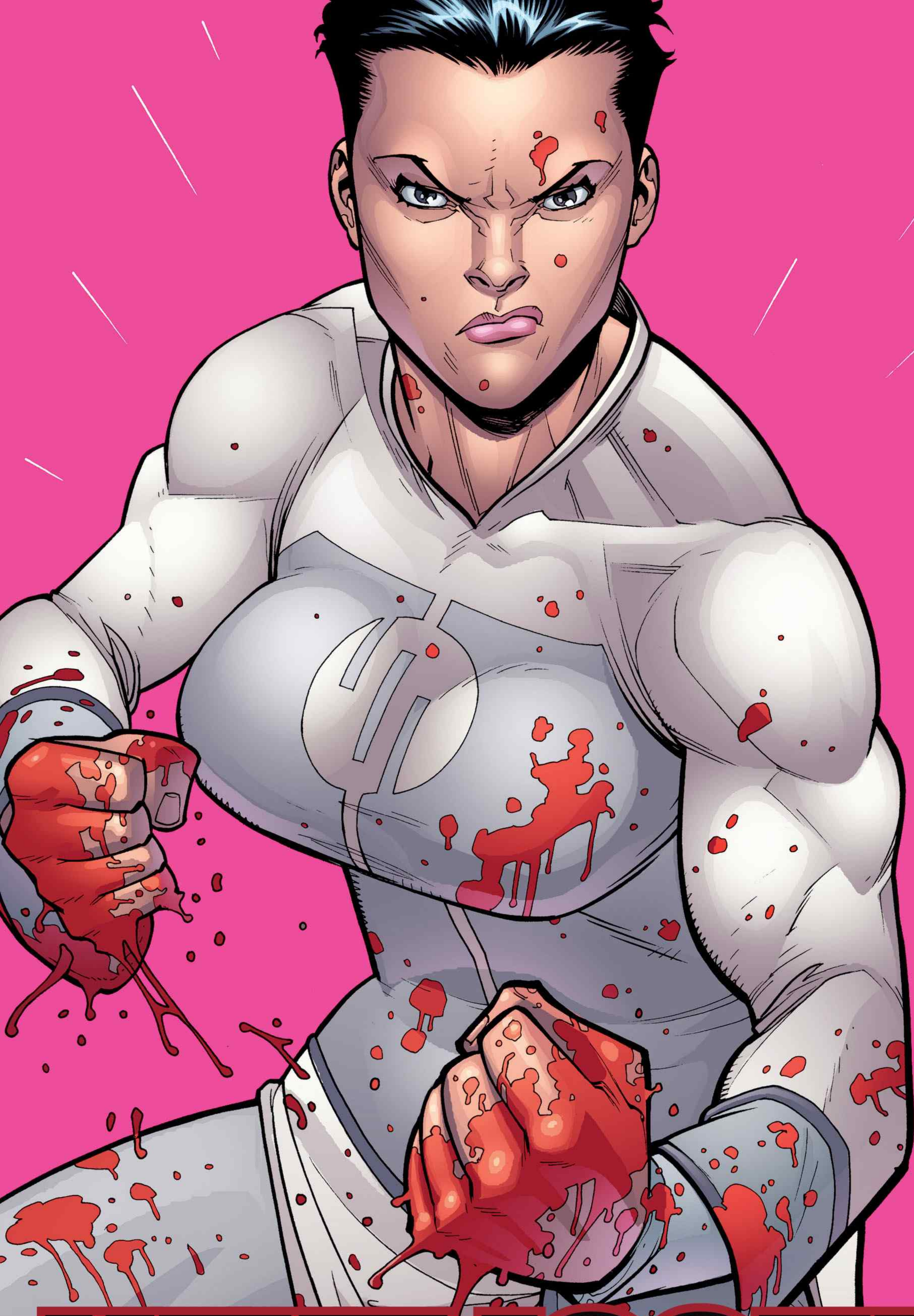
Now, let's see if we can't get 44 out sooner than later.

See you then!

-Robert Kirkman

This Month's Pin-Up is by ROB STOTZ





NEXT ISSUE